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THE HISTORY OF FICTION

A GENERAL HISTORY

OF THE NOVELS OF THE

PRESENT AGE.

BY JOHN DUNN, ESQ.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, TOWN, GREEN, AND DOCKLAND.







THE  
HISTORY OF FICTION:

BEING

A CRITICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE MOST CELEBRATED

PROSE WORKS OF FICTION

FROM THE

EARLIEST GREEK ROMANCES TO THE NOVELS OF THE  
PRESENT AGE.

BY JOHN DUNLOP, ESQ.

THIRD EDITION.

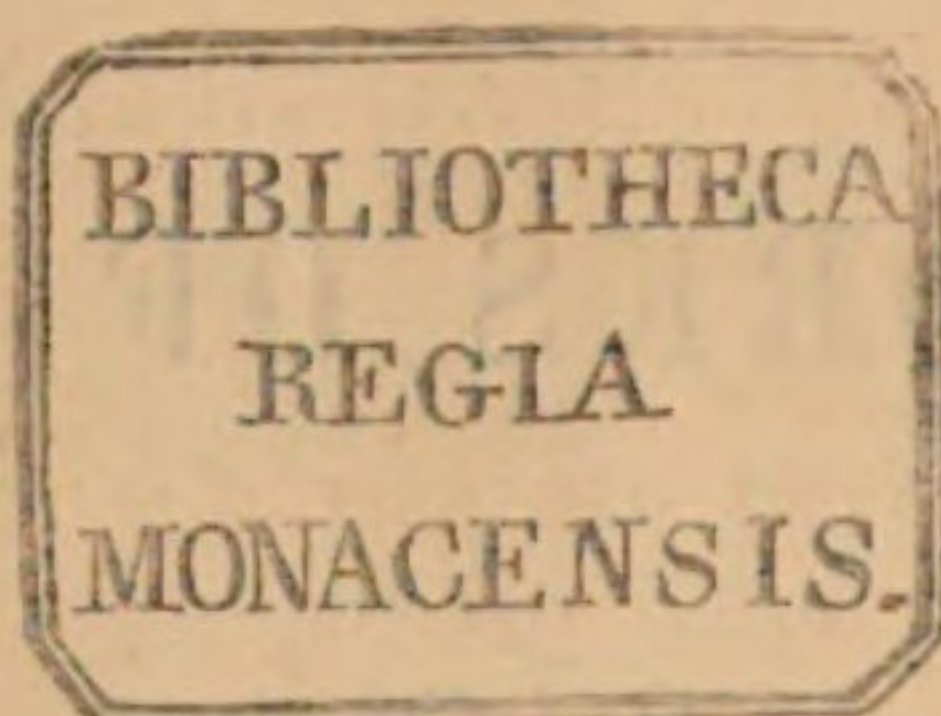
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*of Fiction*

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## ADVERTISEMENT

TO

## THE PRESENT EDITION.

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THE former Edition of this work has been for some time out of print, and, in consequence of the suggestions of numerous persons, the Publishers have reproduced it in a condensed form, in order to render the information and entertainment contained in its pages accessible at a moderate cost.

LONDON, *April* 1845.



## ADVERTISEMENT

TO

## THE SECOND EDITION.

WHEN two volumes of the following work were printed, and most part of the third sent to the press, I received the 26th Number of the Quarterly Review, containing a criticism on the *first edition* of the History of Fiction. In the present edition I flatter myself I have greatly improved the book, partly by adding a variety of new articles—partly by a more exact analysis of some rare productions, of which I had formerly been unable to obtain a perusal, and concerning which I was therefore obliged to trust to secondary sources. It is not impossible, however, that those who candidly admit that they engage in the charitable “employment of groping about for flaws and blemishes” (*Quart. Review*, p. 406), may still discover or make some of their *Dulcia Vitia*. I certainly do not yet pretend to have visited “all the ancient and secluded regions of romance,” by which, I suppose, is meant every “lumber-house of books” in the country, but have myself taken considerable pains, and (as some possessors of old romances will probably allow) have given considerable trouble to others on the subject. In professing, however, to exhibit an accurate analysis of the chief prose works of fiction, I certainly would not be understood to mean, that the work is so minutely exact, as to contain a muster-roll of all the knights who fought with Lancelot,

or a *return* of all the giants who were slain by Amadis or Esplandian, on the *coast* of Ethiopia.

Although I am by no means desirous to be considered of the number of those who “spoken” with irreverence

——— Of men that romances rede  
Of Keveloke, Horn, and of Wade,

nevertheless, I cannot help remarking an unlucky peculiarity which takes place in the republic of *black* letters, and which may be set down as a salutary caution to those who presume to venture into that region. In most other districts of literature, *the possession of a book* is not supposed to confer, like an amulet, any supernatural skill on its owner; nor does a person, for example, who is so lucky as to have a copy of the *Æneid*, suppose himself qualified, from this sole circumstance, to write a *critique* on epic poetry, or a review of Roman literature. The case is different in the republic to which I have alluded. *There*, if a person chance to light on a few leaves, which were in former times

Redeemed from tapers and defrauded pies,

he immediately sets up as an adept, and is even by his brethren acknowledged as such, though all the information he has to bestow,



is, of how many pages or lines his fragment consists. It matters not how perfectly unimportant may be this fragment of

The classics of an age that heard of none ;

and those who have not learned how many lines, half lines, capital letters, and blank pages it contains, are regarded as no more "entitled to courtesy than the Hermanticor of the Heafrates."

The author of the *critique* in the Quarterly Review, after begging leave to shut his eyes on *paganism* (by which is meant the romances written by the Bishop of Tricca and others, during the reigns of the christian and orthodox emperors of Constantinople), proceeds to compare himself and his coadjutors to the "Seven Sleepers of Ephesus" (*Quart. Review*, p. 386). And sorry I am to observe, that (unless the critic procured only a fragment of my work) sleeping he must have been, or he could not have made the following observation :—"Mr Dunlop has confined himself to the French romances relating to Arthur and Charlemagne ; but it would have been advisable to include in a History of Fiction an account of such of the ancient romances, as, though irreducible to either of these classes, are valuable from their intrinsic merit or literary relationship." (P. 395.) Now, so far from confining myself to romances relating to Arthur and Charlemagne, I have devoted nearly half a volume, both in the present and *former edition*, to Amadis and his descendants, and to those romances of which classical or mythological characters are the heroes.

The same slumber which closed his eyes on this part of the work, has exhibited to the Reviewer a tower in the romance of Merlin, where no tower existed. He has attributed to me an inaccuracy, in stating that the enchanter was enclosed in a bush instead of a tower ; but any person who reads the passage, will see that he was in reality enclosed in the bush, but that, by the force of magic, it appeared to him that he was shut up in a strong

tower. "La Damoyselle fist ung cerne autour *du buysson* et entour Merlin, &c., et quant il s' esveilla luy fut advis qu' il estoit enclos en la plus forte tour du monde." This phrase, *luy fut advis*, is the one constantly used in romance, to express the delusions of enchantment. Thus, when Perceforest mistakes the magician Darnant for his wife Idorus, when the sorcerer had assumed her appearance, it is said, "Lors dresse l' espée pour luy couper la tete, et le prent par les cheveulx, et le voulut ferir ; *mais il luy fut advis* qu' il tenoit la plus belle damoiselle que oncques veit par les cheveulx." That Merlin was enclosed in a bush, is also the interpretation of the editors of the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, who, whatever may be their faults in other respects, at least understood French as well as the reviewer, and who, in their account of Merlin, say, "Messire Gauvain et autres chevaliers se mirent en marche pour le (Merlin) chercher en différentes contrées, mais ce fut inutilement, et sa voix seule fut entendue dans la foret de Broceliande, ou Messire Gauvain *le trouvoit enclos, arrêté et invisible, a l' ombre d' un bois d' aubepine* par le moyen d' un charme," &c.

But I have much better authority to produce on this subject, than either my own or that of the authors of the *Bibliothèque des Romans*. In the romance of Ysaie le Triste, the fairy Glorianda, whose credibility on *this* point cannot be called in question, depones to the confinement of Merlin in a tree. She and other fairies, protectresses of Ysaie, having informed the hermit, by whom the child of Tristan was brought up, of the demise of his parents, the recluse, who was not aware of the quality of his guests, presumes to ask their authority for these melancholy tidings. "Il n' y a gueres," replies the eldest of their number, "que nous estions en la Grande Bretagne, en un bois que l' on appelle la forest d' Avaritez ; et environ au meilleu a le *plus bel arbre* que oncques vissiez, *dessoubz lequel Merlin est enfermé par l' engin de la Dame du Lac* : nè jamais ne bougera tant que le siecle



durera. Or avons accoustume que quand nous allons jouer par la forest volontiers nous y reposons, et parlons a icelluy Merlin; et il nous respond: Là nous divisons, aucunes fois toute la nuit entiere." (*L'Histoire de Isaie le Triste*, c. iii.) So much for the belief of the reviewer that Merlin inhabits an aerial garret of the highest tower in the universe!

Nor need the reviewer "admire the caprice which induced Mr Dunlop to confine himself to little more than a meagre outline of the life of the prophet" (p. 394); for, though one of the most curious romances of the class to which it belongs, "the Book of Merlin exactly corresponds," as the reviewer well remarks, "with the metrical romance so ably analyzed by Mr Ellis," and of course is already known to the English reader in a form more agreeable than I could pretend to exhibit it. A similar *caprice* has induced me to "confine myself to little more than a meagre outline" of the romance of Amadis de Gaul, though "one of the most curious of the class to which it belongs," because it has recently been faithfully and ably translated by Mr Southey.

The mention of Amadis de Gaul reminds me of another heavy charge—that I have not treated the romances of chivalry in a manner sufficiently serious, and have even presumed to sneer at the society I have chosen. (P. 408.) Now certainly I did not think it necessary to contemplate the exploits of chivalry with the gravity of Ysaie le Triste, or the productions in which they are detailed, with the sad and sorrowful solemnity of the Knight of the Woful Countenance. Had I used the privilege recommended to me by the reviewer,

Nominibus mollire licet mala; fusca vocetur  
Nigrior Illyricâ cui pice sanguis erit,

I fear I should be considered as having fallen into the phrensy of him who discovered a beautiful infant in the coarse skin of Martornes, and "mistook her hair, which was rough as a horse's mane, for soft flowing

threads of curling gold." It is indeed difficult to know how to proceed, since it appears, from the same *critique*, that *gravity* is equally fatal to romantic topics, and equally to be avoided as levity: We are there informed of the melancholy fact, That the "last legend of Wade has *missed us*, in consequence of the *provoking gravity* of Speght and Kynaston, who have left untold the wonderful birth of Wade, or Vade, the son of King Vilkinus and the Sea Quean!" (P. 397.) I share all the critic's indignation at this hystorie, which I doubt not would have been right pleasaunt and delectable to rede, having *missed us*; and promise, on my own part, to assume the proper solemnity, whenever a graduated and accredited scale is published for that purpose.

There is, however, *one important charge* made in the *critique*, and on which I shall be as *serious* as the reviewer *chuses*. It is said, that in stating the machinery of early romance to be rather of classical than oriental origin, I have concealed that the honour of this discovery is due to Mr Southey; and the charge is so worded as ingeniously to imply that I wished to appropriate the hypothesis to myself. (P. 390.) Now, in the first place, in introducing this subject I have said, "A fourth hypothesis *has been* suggested, which represents the machinery and colouring of fiction, the stories of enchanted gardens, &c., which have been introduced into romance, as derived from classical and mythological authors." (*Hist. of Fic.* vol. i. p. 540, 1st ed.—p. 167, 2d ed.) In the next place, I have said that Mr Ritson *had* successively ridiculed the Gothic, Arabian, and *classical* systems—an observation which, whether correct or not as to Ritson, shows at least that I had no design of appropriating the credit of the hypothesis to myself. "Mr Ritson," says the Review, "could not well ridicule this classical system, since, *as it happens*, it had not then been promulgated." (P. 390.) If, by not being promulgated, the critic means that it was not inserted in the Acts of Parliament, he is more correct than



usual; but nothing can be more erroneous than to suppose that the hypothesis was suggested for the first time in Mr Southey's preface to *Amadis de Gaul*. The reviewer's head is probably "stuffed too full of Gammer Gurton's Needle," and the Pytefull Kronykil of Appollyn of Tire, to have room for publications of more modern literature, or he might have known that Joseph Warton, in his *Essay on the Genius of Pope*, which was written about 1760, shows that the romantic stories of the middle ages are, in general, mere modifications of the classical fables. "The writers," says Warton, "of the old romances, from whom Ariosto and Spenser have borrowed so largely, are supposed to have had copious imaginations; but may they not be indebted for their invulnerable heroes, their monsters, their enchantments, their gardens of pleasure, their winged steeds, and the like, to the Echidna, to the Circe, to the Medea, to the Achilles, to the Syrens, to the Harpies, to the Phryxus, and the Bellerophon of the ancients?" Then, after adducing a variety of other examples, he continues, "Some faint traditions of the ancients might have been kept glimmering and alive during the whole barbarous ages, as they are called; and it is not impossible but these have been the parents of the Genii in the eastern, and the Fairies in the western, world. To say that *Amadis* and *Sir Tristan* have a classical foundation, may at first sight appear paradoxical; but if the subject were examined to the bottom, I am inclined to think that the wildest chimeras in those books of chivalry, with which Don Quixote's library was furnished, would be found to have a close connection with classical mythology." (Vol. ii. sec. 8, p. 65, &c.) *It so happens*, that the same system has been *promulgated* by various other writers: And Mr Southey surely has too many genuine titles to public esteem and admiration to require or lay claim to such as are fictitious.

But the reviewer denies that Mr Ritson has ridiculed any of the systems invented to ac-

count for the origin of romantic fiction: "Mr Dunlop is incorrect in saying that Mr Ritson successively ridiculed the Gothic, Arabian, and Classical fictions. Ritson did no such thing." (P. 390.) I, therefore, beg leave to extract a few passages from Ritson's Introduction to the *Metrical Romances*. In speaking of Warton and his Arabic system he says, "This *eloquent* and flowery historian, whose duty it was to ascertain truth from the evidence of facts, and not to indulge his imagination in *reverie* and romance, has not the slightest authority for this visionary system." (P. 22.) And again, "This *poetical historian* is very ready at a *venture* to affirm any thing, however imaginary: he says, that Gormund, king of the Africans, occurs; and to prove how *well* he understood Geoffrey of Monmouth, and how *accurately* this impostour was acquainted with Arabian allusions, this Gormund was a king of the Danes!" (P. 23.) A few pages on, he calls Mister Warton a lying coxcomb, and concludes, "Warton, misled by that *ignis fatuus* Warburton, and even wishing, it would seem, to *emulate and outdo* that confident and mendacious prelate, has been induced to assert, 'Before these expeditions into the east became fashionable, the principal and leading subjects of the old fables were the exploits of King Arthur; but in the romances written after the Holy War, a new set of champions, &c., were introduced into romance.' In all this *rhapsody* there is scarcely a word of truth." (Pp. 51, 52.) Percy and his Gothic system are ridiculed in similar terms.

In their approach to the more modern fictions, the "Seven Sleepers" have not been able to shake off the drowsiness that has hung on their eye-lids during their progress through the romances of chivalry. Thus, in speaking of the heroic romances of Calprenede and Mad. Scuderi,—"It is observed by Mr Dunlop, that much of the heroic romance has been also derived from the ancient Greek romances; but it appears to us that the Cleo-



patra and Cassandra arose out of the Amadis," &c. (P. 399.) Now, from this passage, the reader would suppose that I had denied the influence of romances of chivalry on the heroic romance, or at least that I had written nothing on the subject. I have said, however, in the very commencement of the chapter, which treats of Heroic Romance, "Many of the elements, of which the heroic romance is compounded must be sought in anterior and more spirited compositions. Thus, we find in the heroic romance, *a great deal of ancient chivalrous delineation.*" (Vol. iii. p. 179, in 1st ed.—p. 221 of 2d ed.) And in mentioning the Polexandre, which is usually considered as the earliest heroic romance, "This ponderous work may be regarded as a sort of intermediate production between these later compositions and the ancient fables of chivalry. It has, indeed, a closer affinity to the heroic romance, but many of the exploits of the hero are as extravagant as those of a paladin or knight of the Round Table. In the episode of the Peruvian Inca, there is a formidable giant; and, in another part of the work, we are introduced to a dragon, which lays waste a whole kingdom. An infinite number of tournaments are also interspersed through the volumes. In *some* of its features, Polexandre bears a striking re-

semblance to the Greek romance." (Vol. iii. p. 186, 1st ed.—p. 230, 2d ed.) The origin, however, of the heroic romance has been more fully considered in the present edition.

While alluding to the improvements in this new edition of my work, I cannot omit expressing my obligations to those by whom my researches have been facilitated. The names of Mr Scott, Mr Douce, and Mr Heber, need only be mentioned, since any eulogy of mine would merely be repeating to a few what is universally known and acknowledged. To Mr Goldsmid, Mr Utterson, and several other individuals, I am also much indebted: and I shall ever regard it as one of the most agreeable circumstances which have attended the publication of the History of Fiction, that it introduced me to the acquaintance of a number of gentlemen, equally distinguished by their talents and by their readiness to oblige.

Even to the *Sleepers of Ephesus*, I must express my acknowledgments, for having half opened their eyes on the first edition of so trifling a publication as the History of Fiction: And I beg leave to wish them in return many a comfortable nap (though not quite so long as that of their prototypes), over the quarto bokes empyrnted by Wynkin, or the folio pages of the Mirrour of Knighthood and Delectable Legend of Don Belianis.

EDINBURGH, 10th Feb. 1816.



## INTRODUCTION.

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THE art of fictitious narrative appears to have its origin in the same principles of selection by which the fine arts in general are created and perfected. Among the vast variety of trees and shrubs which are presented to his view, a savage finds, in his wanderings, some which peculiarly attract his notice by their beauty and fragrance, and these he at length selects, and plants them round his dwelling. In like manner, among the mixed events of human life, he experiences some which are peculiarly grateful, and of which the narrative at once pleases himself, and excites in the minds of his hearers a kindred emotion. Of this kind are unlooked-for occurrences, successful enterprise, or great and unexpected deliverance from signal danger and distress. As he collected round his habitation those objects with which he had been pleased, in order that they might afford him a frequent gratification, so he rests his fancy on those incidents which had formerly awaked the most powerful emotions; and the remembrance of which most strongly excites his tenderness, or pride, or gratitude.

Thus, in process of time, a mass of curious narrative is collected, which is communicated from one individual to another. In almost every occurrence of human life, however, as in almost every scene of nature, something intervenes of a mixed, or indifferent description, tending to weaken the agreeable emotion, which, without it, would be more pure

and forcible. For example, in the process of forming the garden, the savage finds that it is not enough merely to collect a variety of agreeable trees or plants; he discovers that more than this is necessary, and that it is also essential that he should grub up from around his dwelling the shrubs which are useless or noxious, and which weaken or impair the pure delight which he derives from others. He is careful, accordingly, that the rose should no longer be placed beside the thistle, as in the wild, but that it should flourish in a clear, and sheltered, and romantic situation, where its sweets may be undiminished, and where its form can be contemplated without any attending circumstances of uneasiness or disgust. The collector of agreeable facts finds, in like manner, that the sympathy they excite can be heightened by removing from their detail every thing that is not interesting, or that tends to weaken the principal emotion, which it is his intention to raise. He renders, in this way, the occurrences more unexpected, the enterprises more successful, the deliverance from danger and distress more wonderful. "As the active world," says Lord Bacon, "is inferior to the rational soul, so *Fiction* gives to mankind what history denies, and, in some measure, satisfies the mind with shadows when it cannot enjoy the substance: For, upon a narrow inspection, *Fiction* strongly shows that a greater variety of things, a more perfect order, a more beautiful variety, than can any where be found in nature, is



pleasing to the mind. And as real history gives us not the success of things according to the deserts of vice and virtue, *Fiction* corrects it, and presents us with the fates and fortunes of persons rewarded or punished according to merit. And as real history disgusts us with a familiar and constant similitude of things, *Fiction* relieves us by unexpected turns and changes, and thus not only delights, but inculcates morality and nobleness of soul. It raises the mind by accommodating the images of things to our desires, and not, like history and reason, subjecting the mind to things."<sup>1</sup>

From this view of the subject, it is obvious that the fictions framed by mankind, or the narratives with which they are delighted, will vary with their feelings, and with the state of society. Since Fiction may be regarded as select and highly coloured history, those adventures would naturally form the basis of it which had already come to pass, or which were most likely to occur. Accordingly, in a warlike age, it would be peculiarly employed in tales of enterprise and chivalry, and, in times of gallantry, in the detail of love adventures.

The History of Fiction, therefore, becomes, in a considerable degree, interesting to the philosopher, and occupies an important place in the history of the progress of society. By contemplating the fables of a people, we have a successive delineation of their prevalent modes of thinking, a picture of their feelings and tastes and habits. In this respect prose fiction appears to possess advantages considerably superior either to history or poetry. In history there is too little individuality; in poetry too much effort, to permit the poet and historian to portray the manners living as they rise. History treats of man, as it were, in the mass, and the individuals whom

it paints are regarded merely, or principally, in a public light, without taking into consideration their private feelings, tastes, or habits. Poetry is in general capable of too little detail, while its paintings, at the same time, are usually too much forced and exaggerated. But in Fiction we can discriminate without impropriety, and enter into detail without meanness. Hence, it has been remarked, that it is chiefly in the fictions of an age that we can discover the modes of living, dress, and manners of the period. "Finally," says Borromeo (in the preface to the *Notizia de Novellieri Italiani*), "we should remark the light that novels spread on the history of the times. He who doubts of this may read the Eulogium of Bandello, and he will be satisfied that his *Novelliero* may be regarded as a magic mirror, which distinctly reflects the customs and manners of the sixteenth century, an age fertile in great events; and it also acquaints us with many literary and political anecdotes, which the historians of the revolutions of our states have not transmitted to posterity. I, myself, can affirm that in these tales I have found recorded authentic anecdotes of the private lives of sovereigns, which would in vain be sought for in ordinary histories."

But even if the utility which is derived from Fiction were less than it is, how much are we indebted to it for pleasure and enjoyment! It sweetens solitude and charms sorrow—it occupies the attention of the vacant, and unbends the mind of the philosopher. Like the enchanter, Fiction shows us, as it were in a mirror, the most agreeable objects: recalls from a distance the forms which are dear to us, and soothes our own griefs by awakening our sympathy for others. By its means the recluse is placed in the midst of society; and he who is harassed and agitated in the city is transported to rural tranquillity and repose. The rude are refined by an introduction, as it were, to the higher orders of mankind, and even the dissipated and selfish are, in some

<sup>1</sup> De Aug. Scient. Lib. II. p. 1.



degree, corrected by those paintings of virtue and simple nature, which must ever be employed by the novelist, if he wish to awaken emotion or delight.

And such seems now to be the common idea which is entertained of the value of Fiction. Accordingly, this powerful instrument of virtue and happiness, after having been long despised, on account of the purposes to which it had been made subservient, has gradually become more justly appreciated, and more highly valued. Works of Fiction have been produced, abounding at once with the most interesting details, and the most sagacious reflections, and which differ from treatises of abstract philosophy only by the greater justness of their views, and the higher interest which they excite. And it may be presumed, that a path, at once so useful and delightful, will continue to be trod : It may be presumed, that virtue and vice, the conduct of human life, what we are expected to feel, and what we are called on to do and to suffer, will long be taught by example, a method which seems better fitted to improve the mind than abstract propositions and dry discussions.

Entertaining such views of the nature and utility of fiction, and indebted to its charms for some solace and enjoyment, I have employed a few hours of relaxation in drawing up the following notices of its gradual progress. No works are perhaps more useful or agreeable, than those which delineate the advance of the human mind—the history of what different individuals have effected in the course of ages, for the instruction, or even the innocent amusement, of their species. Such a delineation is attended with innumerable advantages : It furnishes a collection of interesting facts concerning the philosophy of mind, which we thus study not in an abstract and introspective method, but in a manner certain and experimental. It retrieves from oblivion a number of individuals, whose now

obsolete works are perhaps in detail unworthy of public attention, but which promoted and diffused, in their own day, light and pleasure, and form as it were landmarks which testify the course and progress of genius. By contemplating also not only what has been done, but the mode in which it has been achieved, a method may perhaps be discovered of proceeding still farther, of avoiding the errors into which our predecessors have fallen, and of following the paths in which they have met success. Retrospective works of this nature, therefore, combine utility, justice, and pleasure ; and accordingly, in different branches of philosophy and literature, various histories of their progress and fortunes have appeared.

I have attempted in the following work to afford such a delineation as is now alluded to, of the origin and progress of fiction, of the various forms which it has successively assumed, and the different authors by whom the prose works in this department of literature have been most successfully cultivated and promoted. I say *prose* works, since such alone are the proper objects of this undertaking. It was objected to a former edition, that I had commenced the History of Fiction only in the decline of literature, and had neglected the most sublime and lofty efforts of mythology and poetry. But it never was my intention to consider fiction as connected with these topics (an inquiry which, if properly conducted, would form a work of greater extent than the whole of the present volumes, and which well deserves a peculiar treatise), but merely to consider the different fictions in prose, which have been given to the world under the name of romance or novel. That I have begun late, arises from the circumstance, that the works of which I have undertaken a description were late in making their appearance ; and I am the more strongly induced to direct my inquiries to this subject, as I am not aware that any writer has hitherto



presented a full and continued view of it, though detached parts have been separately treated with much learning and ingenuity.

Huet, who was the first that investigated this matter, has given us a treatise, formally entitled *De Origine Fabularum*. That part of his essay which relates to the Greek romances, though very succinct, is sufficiently clear, and stored with sound criticism. But having brought down the account of fiction to the later Greeks, and just entered on those composed by the western nations, which have now the name of Romances almost appropriated to them, "he puts the change on his readers," as Warburton has remarked (Notes to Love's Labour's Lost); "and instead of giving us an account of the Tales of Chivalry, one of the most curious and interesting parts of the subject of which he promised to treat, he contents himself with an account of the poems of the Provençal writers, called likewise romances; and so, under the equivocal of a common term, he drops his proper subject, and entertains us with another which had no relation to it except in the name."

Subsequent to the publication of this treatise by Huet, several works were projected in France, with the design of exhibiting a general view of fictitious composition. The first was the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, by the Abbé Lenglet Dufresnoy, in two volumes, published in 1735, under the name of Gordon de Percel. It is a mere catalogue, however, and wants accuracy, the only quality which can render a catalogue valuable.

In 1775, a work, also entitled *Bibliothèque des Romans*, was commenced on a much more extensive plan, and was intended to comprise an analysis of the chief works of fiction from the earliest times. The design was conceived and traced by the Marquis de Paulmy, whose extensive library supplied the contributors with the materials from which their abstracts

were drawn. The conductor was M. de Bastide, one of the feeble imitators of the younger Crebillon. He supplied, however, few articles, but enjoyed as co-operators, the Chevalier de Mayer, and M. de Cardonne; as also the Comte de Tressan, whose contributions have been likewise published in the collection of his own works, under the title *Corps d' Extraits*.

In the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, prose works of fiction are divided into classes, and a summary of one romance from each order is exhibited in turn. This compilation was published periodically till the year 1787, and four volumes were annually given to the world.

Next to the enormous length, and the frequent selection of worthless materials, the principal objection to the work is the arrangement adopted by the editors. Thus, a romance of chivalry intervenes between two Greek romances, or is presented alternately with a French heroic romance, or modern novel. Hence the reader is not furnished with a view of the progress of Fiction in continuity; he cannot trace the imitations of successive fablers, nor the way in which fiction has been modified by the manners of an age. There is besides little or no criticism of the novels or romances which are analyzed, and the whole work seems to have been written under the eye of the sultan who said he would cut off the head of the first man who made a reflection. But even the utility of the abstracts, which should have been the principal object of the work, is in a great measure lost, as it appears to have been the intention of the editors rather to present an entertaining story, somewhat resembling that of the original, than a faithful analysis. Characters and sentiments are thus exhibited, incongruous with ancient romance, and abhorrent from the opinions of the era whose manners it reflects. It is only as presenting a true and lively picture of the age, that romance has claims on



the attention of the antiquarian or philosopher; and if its genuine remains be adulterated with a mixture of sentiments and manners of modern growth, the composition is heterogeneous and uninformative. (*Rose's Amadis de Gaul.*)

Abstracts of romances omitted in the *Bibliothèque des Romans* have been published in *Mélanges tirés d'une Grande Bibliothèque*, which is a selection from the scarce manuscripts and publications contained in the library of the Marquis de Paulmy. The work has also been continued in the *Nouvelle Bibliothèque des Romans*, which comprises abridgments of the most recent productions of the French, English, and German novelists.

In this country there has been no attempt towards a general History of Fiction. Dr

Percy, Warton, and others, have written, as is well known, with much learning and ingenuity, on that branch of the subject which relates to the origin of *Romantic Fiction*—the marvellous decorations of chivalry. This inquiry, however, comprehends but a small part of the subject, and even here research has oftener been directed to the establishment of a theory, than to the investigation of truth.

In the following work I shall try to present a faithful analysis of those early and scarce productions which form, as it were, the land-marks of Fiction. Select passages will occasionally be added, and I shall endeavour by criticisms to give such a sketch as may enable the reader to form some idea of the nature and merit of the works themselves, and of the transmission of fable from one age and country to another.



CHAPTER I

The first part of the book is devoted to a general survey of the subject. It begins with a definition of the term "philosophy" and then proceeds to a discussion of the various branches of the subject. The author then discusses the history of philosophy, from the ancient Greeks to the modern era. He then discusses the various methods of philosophy, such as logic, metaphysics, and ethics. Finally, he discusses the various schools of thought, such as Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism.

The second part of the book is devoted to a more detailed discussion of the various branches of philosophy. It begins with a discussion of logic, which is the study of the principles of reasoning. The author then discusses metaphysics, which is the study of the nature of reality. He then discusses ethics, which is the study of the principles of morality. Finally, he discusses politics, which is the study of the principles of government.



# HISTORY OF FICTION, &c.

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## CHAPTER I.

Origin of Fictitious Narrative.—Earliest Writers of Greek Romance.—Heliodorus.—Achilles Tatius.—Longus.—Chariton.—Joannes Damascenus.—Eustathius.—Remarks on this Species of Composition.

THE nature and utility of Fiction having been pointed out, and the design of the work explained in the introductory remarks, it now remains to prosecute what forms the proper object of this undertaking,—the origin and progress of prose works of fiction, with the analysis and criticism of the most celebrated which have been successively presented to the world.

We have already seen that fiction has in all ages formed the delight of the rudest and the most polished nations. It was late, however, and after the decline of its nobler literature, that fictions in prose came to be cultivated as a species of composition in Greece. In early times, the mere art of writing was too difficult and dignified to be employed in prose, and even the laws of the principal legislators were then promulgated in verse. In the better ages of Greece, all who felt the *mens divinator*, and of whose studies the embellishments of fiction were the objects, naturally wrote in verse, and men of genius would have disdained to occupy themselves with a simple domestic tale in prose. This mode of composition was reserved for a later period, when the ranks of poetry had been filled with great names, and the very abundance of great models had produced satiety. Poetical productions, too, in order to be relished, require to be read with a spark of the same feeling in which they are composed, and in a luxurious age, and among a luxurious

people, demand even too much effort in the reader, or hearer, to be generally popular. To such, a simple narrative, a history of ludicrous or strange adventures, forms the favourite amusement; and we thus find that listening to the recital of tales has at all times been the peculiar entertainment of the indolent and voluptuous nations of the East. A taste, accordingly, for this species of narrative, or composition, seems to have been most early and most generally prevalent in Persia and other Asiatic regions, where the nature of the climate, and effeminacy of the inhabitants, conspired to promote its cultivation.

The people of Asia Minor, who possessed the fairest portion of the globe, were addicted to every species of luxury and magnificence; and having fallen under the dominion of the Persians, imbibed with the utmost avidity the amusing fables of their conquerors. The Milesians, who were a colony of Greeks, and spoke the Ionic dialect, excelled all the neighbouring nations in ingenuity, and first caught from the Persians this rage for fiction: but the tales they invented, and of which the name has become so celebrated, have all perished. There is little known of them, except that they were not of a very moral tendency, and were principally written by a person of the name of Aristides, whose tales were translated into Latin by Sisenna, the Roman historian, about the time of the civil wars of Marius and



Sylla. Huet, Vossius,<sup>1</sup> and the other writers by whom the stories of Aristides have been mentioned, concur in representing them as short amatory narratives in prose; yet it would appear from two lines in Ovid's *Tristia*, that some of them, at least, had been written in verse:—

Junxit Aristides Milesia carmina secum—  
Pulsus Aristides nec tamen urbe sua est.

But though the Milesian tales have perished, of their nature some idea may be formed from the stories of Parthenius Nicenus,<sup>2</sup> many of which, there is reason to believe, are extracted from these ancient fables, or at least are written in the same spirit. The tales of Nicenus are about forty in number, but appear to be mere sketches. They chiefly consist of accounts of every species of seduction, and the criminal passions of the nearest relations. The principal characters generally come to a deplorable end, though seldom proportioned to what they merited by their vices. Nicenus seems to have grafted the Milesian tales on the mythological fables of Apollodorus and similar writers, and also to have borrowed from early historians and poets, whose productions have not descended to us. His work is inscribed to the Latin poet Cornelius Gallus, the contemporary and friend of Virgil.<sup>3</sup> Indeed the author says that it was composed for his use, to furnish him with materials for elegies and other poems.

The inhabitants of Asia Minor, and especially the Milesians, had a considerable intercourse with the Greeks of Attica and Peloponnesus, whose genius also naturally disposed them to fiction: they were delighted with the tales of the eastern nations, and pleasure produced imitation.

Previous, however, to the age of Alexander the Great, little seems to have been attempted in this style of composition by the European Greeks; but the more frequent intercourse which his conquests introduced between the Greek and Asiatic nations, opened at once all the sources of fiction. Clearchus, who was a disciple of Aristotle, and who wrote a history of fictitious love adventures, seems to have been the first author who gained any celebrity

by this species of composition. Of the romances, however, which were written previous to the appearance of the Theagenes and Chariclea of Heliodorus, I am compelled to give a very meagre account, as the works themselves have perished, and our knowledge of them is chiefly derived from the summary which is contained in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius.

Some years after the composition of the fictitious history of Clearchus, Antonius Diogenes wrote a more perfect romance than had hitherto appeared, founded on the wandering adventures and loves of Dinias and Dercyllis, entitled, "Of the Incredible Things in Thule."<sup>4</sup> That island, of which the position is one of the most doubtful points in ancient geography, was not, according to Diogenes, the most distant of the globe, as he talks of several beyond it: Thule is but a single station for his adventurers, and many of the most incredible things are beheld in other quarters of the world. The idea of the work of Diogenes is said to have been taken from the *Odyssey*, and in fact many of the incidents seem to have been borrowed from that poem. Indeed the author mentions a number of writers prior to himself, particularly Antiphanes, from whom he had collected these wonderful relations. Aulus Gellius informs us, that coming on one occasion from Greece to Italy, he landed at Brundisium, in Calabria, where he purchased a collection of fabulous histories, under the names of Aristeus, Ctesias, and Onesicritus, which were full of stories concerning nations which saw during night, but were blind during day, and various other fictions, which, we shall find, were inserted in the "Incredible Things in Thule." The work of Diogenes is praised by Photius for its purity of style, and the delightful variety of its adventures; yet, to judge from that author's abridgment, it seems to have contained a series of the most improbable incidents. But though filled with the most trifling and incredible narrations, it is deserving of attention, as it seems to have been a repository from which Achilles Tatius and succeeding fablers derived the materials of less defective romances.

<sup>1</sup> De Historicis Græcis.—*Aristides*.

<sup>2</sup> Παρθένιου Νικαίου περί τραγικών παθημάτων.

<sup>3</sup> Eclog. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Αντωνίου Διογενούς των ὑπερ Θούλην ἀπίστων λόγοι.



Dinias flying from Arcadia, his native country, arrives at the mouth of the river Tanais. Urged by the intensity of the cold, he proceeds towards the east, and, having made a circuit round the globe, he at length reaches Thule. Here he forms an acquaintance with Dercyllis, the heroine of the romance, who had been driven from Tyre along with her brother Mantinia, by the intrigues of Paapis, an Egyptian priest. She relates to Dinias how she had wandered through Rhodes and Crete, and also among the Cimmerians, where she had a view of the infernal regions, through favour of her deceased servant Myrto;—how, being separated from her brother, she arrived with a person of the name of Ceryllus at the tomb of the Syrens, and afterwards at a city in Spain, where the people saw during the night, a privilege which was neutralized by total blindness during day.—Dercyllis farther relates how she travelled among the Celts, and a nation of Amazons; and that in Sicily she again met with her brother Mantinia, who related to her adventures still more extraordinary than her own; having seen all the sights in the sun, moon, and most remote islands of the globe. Dercyllis, after many other vicissitudes, arrives in Thule, whither she is followed by her old enemy Paapis, who, by his magic art, makes her die every night and come alive again in the morning,—an easy kind of punishment, being equivalent to a refreshing nap. The secret of these incantations, which chiefly consisted in spitting in the victim's face, is detected by Azulis, who had accompanied Dinias into Thule, and the spells of the powerful magician being through his means broken, Dercyllis and Mantinia return to their native country. After the departure of his friends, Dinias wanders beyond Thule, and advances towards the Pole. In these regions, he says, the darkness continued sometimes a month, sometimes six months, but at certain places for a whole year; and the length of the day was proportioned to that of the night. At last, awakening one morning, he finds himself at Tyre, where he meets with his old friends Mantinia and Dercyllis, with whom he passes the remainder of his life.

Besides the principal subject of the romance, of which an abstract has been given by Photius, Porphyrius, in his Life of Pythagoras,

has preserved a long and fabulous account of that mysterious philosopher, which, he tells us, formed an episode of the Incredible Things in Thule, and was related to Dercyllis by Aristæus, one of the companions of her flight from Tyre, and an eminent disciple of Pythagoras. Mnesarchus one day found, under a large poplar, an infant, who lay gazing undazzled on the sun, holding a reed in his mouth, and sipping the dew which dropped on him from the poplar. This child was carried home by Mnesarchus, who bestowed on him the name of Aristæus, and brought him up with his youngest son Pythagoras. At length Aristæus became one of the scholars of that philosopher, along with Zamolxis, the legislator of the Getæ, after he had undergone an *inspectio corporis*, to which the Samian sage invariably subjected his disciples, as he judged of the mental faculties by the external form. Aristæus was thus enabled to give an account of the travels of his master, and the mystical learning he acquired among the Egyptians and Babylonians; of the tranquil life which he passed in Italy, and the mode in which he healed diseases by incantations and magic poems; for he knew verses of such power that they produced oblivion of pain, soothed sorrow, and repressed all inordinate appetites.

The romance of the "Incredible Things in Thule," consisted of twenty-four books, in which Dinias was represented as relating his own adventures, and those he had heard from Dercyllis, to Cymba, who had been sent to Tyre by the Arcadians to prevail on him to return to his native country. The account of these adventures is, at the beginning of the romance, described as having been engraved on cypress tablets by one of Cymba's attendants; at the request of Dinias they were placed in his tomb after his death, and are feigned to have been discovered by Alexander the Great during the siege of Tyre.<sup>1</sup>

After the composition of the Dinias and Dercyllis of Diogenes, a considerable period seems to have elapsed without the production of any fictitious narrative deserving the appellation of a romance.

Lucius Patrensis and Lucian, who were nearly contemporary, lived during the reign

<sup>1</sup> Photius Bibliotheca Cod. 156, p. 355. ed. 1653. Rothomagi.



of the emperor Marcus Aurelius: Lucius collected accounts of magical transformations; Photius remarks, that his style is delightful by its perspicuity, purity, and sweetness,<sup>1</sup> but as his work comprehends a relation of incidents professedly incredible, without any attempt on the part of the author to give them the appearance of reality, it cannot perhaps be properly admitted into the number of romances.

A considerable portion of the *Metamorphoses* of Lucius were transferred by Lucian into his *Ass*, to which he also gave the name of Lucius; a work which may perhaps be again mentioned when we come to speak of the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, a longer and more celebrated production of the same species.

About the time these authors lived, *Jamblichus* wrote his *Babylonica*.<sup>2</sup> The romance itself has been lost, but the epitome given by Photius shows that little improvement had been made in this species of composition, during the period which had elapsed since the production of the *Dinias* and *Dercyllis* of *Diogenes*.

*Garmus*, king of *Babylon*, having fallen in love with *Sinonis*, but not being agreeable to the object of his affections, the lady escapes from his power along with her lover *Rhodanes*. The probability of this event having been anticipated, *Damas* and *Saca*, two eunuchs who had been appointed to watch them (after having their nose and ears cut off, for their negligence in allowing their flight), are sent out by the king to recommit them. The romance principally consists of the adventures of the fugitives, and their hair-breadth escapes from these royal messengers. We are told that the lovers first sought refuge with certain shepherds in a meadow, but a demon, or spectre, which haunted that quarter in the shape of a goat (τραγὸν τι φασμα), having become enamoured of *Sinonis*, she is compelled to leave this shelter, in order to avoid his fantastic addresses. It is then related how *Sinonis* and *Rhodanes* conceal themselves in a cavern, in which they are beleaguered by *Damas*; but the eunuch and his forces are routed by a swarm of poisonous bees. By this intervention the lovers escape from the

cave, but having partaken of the honey of their deliverers, which was of a noxious quality, they faint on the way, and during this swoon are passed as dead by the troops of *Damas*. Having at length recovered, they proceed in their flight, and take up their abode with a man who poisons his brother, and afterwards accuses them of the murder: a charge from which they are freed by the accuser laying violent hands on himself. With singular luck in meeting good company, they next quarter themselves with a robber. During their stay his habitation is burned by the troops of *Damas*, but the lovers escape from the eunuch, by alleging that they are the spectres of those whom the robber had murdered in his house. Further prosecuting their flight they meet with the funeral of a young girl, who is discovered, when on the point of interment, to be yet alive. The sepulchre being left vacant, *Sinonis* and *Rhodanes* sleep in it during that night, and are again passed as corpses by their *Babylonian* pursuers; but *Sinonis* having made free with the dead clothes, is taken up while attempting to dispose of them, by *Soræchus*, the magistrate of the district, who announces his intention of forwarding his prisoner to *Babylon*. In one of the respectable dwellings which they had visited in their flight, our lovers had enjoyed an opportunity of providing themselves with poison, for an emergency of this description. Their design, however, being suspected by their guards, a soporific draught is substituted, of which our hero and heroine partake, and awaken, to their great surprise, from the trance into which it had thrown them, when in the vicinity of *Babylon*. *Sinonis* in despair stabs herself, but not mortally; and the compassion of *Soræchus* being now excited, he consents to the escape of his captives, who experience a new series of adventures, rivaling in probability those which have been related. They first come to a temple of *Venus*, situated in an island of the *Euphrates*, where the wound of *Sinonis* is cured. Thence they seek refuge with a cottager, whose daughter being employed to dispose of some trinkets belonging to *Sinonis*, is mistaken for our heroine, and *Garmus* is forthwith apprised

<sup>1</sup> "Ἐστὶν δὲ τὴν φρασίν σαφὴς τε καὶ καθαρὸς καὶ φίλος γλυκύτης.—Photius. Bib.

<sup>2</sup> *Ἰαμβλικὴν Ἀραματικὸν*, λβ. App. No. I.



that she had been seen in the neighbourhood. The cottage girl, who had remarked the suspicions of the purchasers, flies with all possible dispatch. On her way home she enters a house, where she witnesses the horrible spectacle of a lover laying violent hands on himself, after murdering his mistress; and, sprinkled with the blood of these unfortunate victims, she returns to her paternal mansion. Sinonis, perceiving from the report of this girl, that she could no longer remain with safety in her present habitation, prepares for departure. Rhodanes, before setting out with his mistress, salutes the peasant girl; but Sinonis perceiving blood on his lips, and being aware whence it had come, is seized with transports of ungovernable jealousy; she is with difficulty prevented from stabbing her imaginary rival, and flies to the house of Setapo, a wealthy but profligate Babylonian. Setapo immediately pays his addresses; Sinonis feigns to yield to his solicitations, but contrives to intoxicate him in the course of the evening, and murders him during night. Having escaped at day-break, she is pursued by the slaves of Setapo, and committed to custody, in order to answer for the crime. By this time, however, the false intelligence that Sinonis was discovered, had reached the king of Babylon, who signalizes the joyful news by a general jail delivery throughout his dominions, in the benefit of which the real Sinonis is of course included. While our heroine was experiencing such vicissitudes of fortune, the dog of Rhodanes (for he too has his adventures) scents out the place, where, it will be recollected, a lover had murdered his mistress. The father of Sinonis arrives at this spot while the animal is employed in devouring the remains of this unfortunate woman, and mistaking the dead body for that of his daughter, he gives it interment, and erects over it a monument, with the inscription, "Here lies the beautiful Sinonis."—Rhodanes visiting this place a short while afterwards, and perceiving the inscription, adds to it, "and also the beautiful Rhodanes," (*Και Ροδανης ο Καλος*), but is prevented from accomplishing his intention of stabbing himself by the approach of the peasant girl, who had been the cause of the jealousy of Sinonis, and who informs him that it was another than his mistress who had

perished there. At this time the unfortunate detention and threatened punishment of Soræchus, by whom the lovers had originally been allowed to escape, enables the Babylonian officers to trace the flight of Rhodanes. He is in consequence delivered up to Garmus, and is speedily nailed to the cross by that monarch. While he is in this crisis, and while Garmus is dancing and carousing round the place of execution, a messenger arrives with intelligence that Sinonis is about to be espoused by the king of Syria, into whose dominions she had ultimately escaped. Rhodanes is taken down from the cross, and appointed general of a Babylonish army, which is sent against that monarch. This is a striking but deceitful change of fortune, as the inferior officers are ordered by Garmus to kill Rhodanes, should he obtain the victory, and to bring Sinonis alive to Babylon. The king of Syria is totally defeated, and Rhodanes recovers Sinonis; but instead of being slain by the officers of his army, he is chosen king of the Babylonians. All this, indeed, had been clearly foreshown by the portent of the swallow, which was seen by Garmus, pursued by an eagle and a kite, and after escaping the talons of the former, became the victim of an enemy apparently less formidable.<sup>1</sup>

The romance, of which the above account has been given, is divided into sixteen books. If we may judge of the original from the epitome, transmitted by Photius, the groundwork of the story was well conceived, since the close and eager pursuit by the eunuchs gives rise to narrow escapes, which might have been rendered interesting. But the particular adventures are unnatural and monotonous. The hero and heroine generally evade the search of their pursuers by passing as defuncts, or spirits, which produces a disagreeable sameness in a subject which admitted of much variety. There is, besides, an unpleasant ferocity in the character of Sinonis, and too many of the scenes are laid among tombs and caverns, and the haunts of murderers. Indeed most of the incidents, though often abundantly ludicrous, are of a dark and gloomy cast; a character which by

<sup>1</sup> Photii Bibliotheca, cod. 94, p. 235.

*Tomb of the 2 lovers*



no means appertains to the adventures in the subsequent romances of Heliodorus, Chariton, or Tatius.

Besides these faults in the principal story, the episodes of Berenice, queen of Egypt, and of the Temple of Venus, situated on an island formed by the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris, seem to have been extremely tedious and ill-placed. Part of the last episode, however, is curious, as presenting us with a discussion resembling the *Tensons*, or pleas for the courts of love, in the middle ages. Mesopotamia, the youngest daughter of the priestess of Venus, had three lovers, on one of whom she bestowed a goblet from which she usually drank; on the head of the second she placed a chaplet of flowers which had encircled her brow, while the third received a kiss. The lovers contend which had obtained the most distinguished mark of favour, and plead their cause in presence of Boroehus, a distinguished amatory judge, who decides in favour of the kiss.

Jamblichus has been censured by Huet,<sup>1</sup> for the awkward introduction of his episodes, and the inartificial *disposition* of the whole work. He seems, according to that author, to have entertained a complete contempt for the advice of Horace, with regard to hurrying his readers into the middle of the action;—he never departs from the order of time, and trudges on according to the era of dates, with all the exactness of a chronologer.

About two centuries elapsed from the death of Jamblichus, till the composition of the Theagenes and Chariclea of Heliodorus,<sup>2</sup> Bishop of Tricca, an author who in every particular, but especially in the arrangement of his fable, far excelled his predecessors.

There are three points chiefly to be considered in a novel or romance, the *Subject*, the *Disposition*, and the *Ornaments*; a classification which may be regarded as comprehending the means of estimating the most material beauties and defects of any fictitious narrative.

In adopting these principles of criticism, I do not mean to affirm that a good work can be written by rule, or that a romance is excellent merely in proportion to its confor-

mity to certain critical precepts. Nothing, for instance, can be more irregular than Tristram Shandy, and nothing can be more regular than some of the novels of Cumberland; yet no one prefers the novels of Cumberland to the work of Sterne. A man of genius will produce an interesting composition in defiance of the laws of criticism, while one without talent will compose a work by rule, as a stone-cutter may hew out a statue according to the most approved proportions, which will be totally lifeless and insignificant. But though the province of criticism is not to confine genius to one narrow and trodden path, it does not follow that critical rules are to be altogether disregarded. The work of the man of genius would have been still better had he not wantonly transgressed them, and even the labour produced by the person of inferior talents would have been worse had he not rigidly adhered to them. In estimating all the productions of the fine arts, we are obliged to analyze them, and to describe them by their grosser parts, as the ethereal portion, or that which pervades the heart and feelings, cannot be represented. We judge of the paintings of Raphael, and criticise them under the heads of design and invention and colouring; but we can no more express the emotions they produce, than we can paint the odours of the rose, though we delineate its form and portray its colours.

The story, or subject, of Theagenes and Chariclea,<sup>3</sup> does not possess any peculiar excellence, as will appear from the following summary.

The action of the romance is supposed to take place previous to the age of Alexander the Great, while Egypt was tributary to the Persian monarchs. During that period a queen of Ethiopia, called Persina, having viewed at an amorous crisis a statue of Andromeda, gives birth to a daughter of fair complexion. Fearing that her husband might not think the cause proportioned to the effect, she commits the infant in charge to Sisimithres, an Ethiopian senator, and deposits in his hands a ring and some writings, explaining the circumstances of her

<sup>1</sup> De Orig. Fab.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, No. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ηλιοδωρες Αιθιοπικαν βιβλια δεκα.



birth. The child is named Chariclea, and remains for seven years with her reputed father. At the end of this period he becomes doubtful of her power to preserve her chastity any longer in her native country. He therefore determines to carry her along with him, on an embassy to which he had been appointed to Oroondates, satrap of Egypt. In that land he accidentally meets Charicles, priest of Delphos, who was travelling on account of domestic afflictions, and to him he transfers the care of Chariclea. Charicles brings her to Delphos, and destines her for the wife of his nephew Alcamenus. In order to reconcile her mind to this alliance, he delivers her over to Calasiris, an Egyptian priest, who at that period resided at Delphos, and undertook to prepossess her in favour of the young man. About the same time, Theagenes, a Thessalian, and descendant of Achilles, comes to Delphos, for the performance of some sacred rite: Theagenes and Chariclea having seen each other in the temple, become mutually enamoured. The contrivance of this incident seems to be borrowed from the Hero and Leander of Musæus, where the lovers meet in the fane of Venus at Sestos. Places of worship, however, were in those days the usual scene of the first interview of lovers, as women were at other times much confined and almost inaccessible to admirers. There too, even in a later period, the most romantic attachments were formed. It was in the chapel of St Clair, at Avignon, that Petrarch first beheld Laura: and Boccaccio became enchanted with Mary of Arragon in the church of the Cordeliers, at Naples.

Calasiris, who had been engaged to influence the mind of Chariclea in favour of her intended husband, is warned in a vision by Apollo that he should return to his own country, and take Theagenes and Chariclea along with him. Henceforth his whole attention is directed to deceive Charicles, and effect his escape from Delphos. Having met with some Phœnician merchants, and having informed the lovers of his intention, he sets sail along with them for Sicily, to which country the Phœnician vessel was bound; but soon after, passing Zacynthus, the ship is attacked by pirates, who carry Calasiris

and those under his protection to the coast of Egypt. On the banks of the Nile, Trachinus, the captain of the pirates, prepares a feast to solemnize his nuptials with Chariclea, but Calasiris, with considerable ingenuity, having persuaded Pelorus, the second in command, that Chariclea is enamoured of him, a contest naturally arises between him and Trachinus during the feast, and the other pirates, espousing different sides of the quarrel, are all slain except Pelorus, who is attacked and put to flight by Theagenes. The stratagem of Calasiris, however, is of little avail, except to himself: for immediately after the contest, while Calasiris is sitting on a hill at some distance, Theagenes and Chariclea are seized by a band of Egyptian robbers, who conduct them to an establishment formed on an island in a remote lake. Thyamis, the captain of the banditti, becomes enamoured of Chariclea, and declares an intention of espousing her. Chariclea pretends that she is the sister of Theagenes, in order that the jealousy of the robber may not be excited, and the safety of her lover endangered. This deception is practised in other parts of the romance, particularly when Arsace becomes enamoured of Theagenes at Memphis. The incident has been also adopted in many of the subsequent Greek romances, particularly in Ismene and Ismenias, who declare themselves to be brother and sister when they meet in a servile condition in the house of Sostratus. This notion was perhaps suggested to the author of Theagenes and Chariclea, by some passages in the Old Testament.—Heliodorus was a bishop, and though he did not arrive at that dignity till after the composition of his romance, he must have found, in the course of his studies, that Sarah and Abram passed, and for similar reasons, for brother and sister while in Egypt, and that Isaac and Rebecca imposed on the people of Gerar, under pretence of the same relationship; stratagems which have been much applauded by St Chrysostom, St Ambrose, and other fathers of the church.

Chariclea, however, is not long compelled to assume the character of the sister of Theagenes. The colony is speedily destroyed by the forces of the satrap of Egypt, who was excited to this act of authority by a complaint from Nausi-



cles, a Greek merchant, that the banditti had carried off his mistress. Thyamis, the captain of the robbers, escapes by flight, and Cnemon, a young Athenian, who had been detained in the colony, and with whom Theagenes had formed a friendship during his confinement, sets out in quest of him. Theagenes and Chariclea depart soon after on their way to a certain village, where they had agreed to meet Cnemon, but are intercepted on the road by the satrap's forces. Theagenes is sent as a present to the king of Persia; and Chariclea being falsely claimed by Nausicles as his mistress, is conducted to his house. Here Calasiris had accidentally fixed his abode, since his separation from Theagenes and Chariclea; and was also doing the honours of the house to Cnemon in the landlord's absence. Chariclea being recognised by Calasiris, Nausicles abandons the claim to her which he had advanced, and sets sail with Cnemon for Greece, while Calasiris and Chariclea proceed in search of Theagenes. On arriving at Memphis, they find that, with his usual good luck, he had again fallen into the power of Thyamis, and was besieging that capital along with the robber. A treaty of peace, however, is speedily concluded. Thyamis is discovered to be the son of Calasiris, and is elected high-priest of Memphis. Arsace, who commanded in that city, in the absence of her husband, falls in love with Theagenes; but, as he perseveres in resisting all her advances, and in maintaining his fidelity to Chariclea, she orders him to be put to the torture: she also commands her nurse, who was the usual confidante of her amours, and instrument of her cruelty, to poison Chariclea; but the cup-bearer having given the nurse the goblet intended for Chariclea, she expires in convulsions. This, however, serves as a pretext to condemn Chariclea as a poisoner, and she is accordingly appointed to be burnt. After she had ascended the pile, and the fire had been lighted, she is saved for that day by the miraculous effects of the stone Pantarbe, which she wore on her finger, and which warded off the flames from her person. During the ensuing night a messenger arrives

from Oroondates, the husband of Arsace, who was at that time carrying on a war against the Ethiopians: he had been informed of the misconduct of his wife, and had despatched one of his officers to Memphis, with orders to bring Theagenes and Chariclea to his camp. Arsace hangs herself; but the lovers are taken prisoners, on their way to Oroondates, by the scouts of the Ethiopian army, and are conducted to Hydaspes, who was at that time besieging Oroondates in Syene. This city having been taken, and Oroondates vanquished in a great battle, Hydaspes returns to his capital, Meroe, where, by advice of his Gymnosophists, he proposes to sacrifice Theagenes and Chariclea to the sun and moon, the deities of Ethiopia. As virgins were alone entitled to the privilege of being accepted as victims, Chariclea is subjected to a trial of chastity, an unfortunate precedent for novelists, as we shall afterwards find. Theagenes, while on the very brink of sacrifice, performs many feats of strength and dexterity. A bull, which was his companion in misfortune, having broken from the altar, Theagenes follows him on horseback, subdues him, and returns on his back.<sup>1</sup> At length, when the two lovers are about to be immolated, Chariclea, by means of the ring and fillet which had been attached to her at her birth, and had been carefully preserved, is discovered to be the daughter of Hydaspes, which is farther confirmed by the testimony of Sisimithres, once her reputed father; and by the opportune arrival of Charicles, priest of Delphos, who was wandering through the world in search of Chariclea. After some demur on the part of the Gymnosophists, Chariclea obtains her own release and that of Theagenes, is united to him in marriage, and acknowledged as heiress of the Ethiopian empire.

Such is the abstract of the story of Theagenes and Chariclea. Now the chief excellencies of the story, or *nuda materia* of a romance, are Novelty, Probability, and Variety of Incident; in each of which views it may be proper to examine this fictitious narrative.

Of the claims of Heliodorus to originality of invention we are incompetent judges, as

<sup>1</sup> This exercise, called *Taurokathapsia* was intended to inure youth to martial fatigue, and was much

practised in Thessaly, the country of Theagenes, whence it was afterwards introduced at Rome.

*trial of chastity*



the romances that preceded Theagenes and Chariclea have for the most part perished. Many of the adventures, however, are probably taken from Diogenes and Jamblichus; and it is even suspected that the leading events in the story have been founded on a tragedy of Sophocles, called the Captives, (*Αιχμαλωτοι*) not now extant.<sup>1</sup> A few of the incidents seem also to have been borrowed from the sacred writings. The stratagem of Sarah and Abraham has been already mentioned. From the frequent perusal of the Scriptures, the bishop may have acquired his fondness for visions; and the powerful effects produced by the statue of Andromeda on the complexion of his heroine, would not appear impossible to one who knew the success of the contrivance by which Jacob obtained so large a portion of the lambs of Laban.

As to probability of incident, Heliodorus outrages all verisimilitude in different ways as for example, by the extraordinary interviews which he brings about, and the summary manner in which he disposes of a character which has become supernumerary. When it is convenient for him that two persons should meet, one of them comes to travel in a country where apparently he had nothing to do; and when a character becomes superfluous, the author finds no better resource than informing us that he was bit by an asp, or died suddenly in the night. Unexpected events no doubt enliven a narrative; but if they greatly violate the order and course of nature, that belief in an ideal presence, which is essential to relish or interest, is totally overthrown; and the credence of reality being once destroyed, the waking dream cannot again be restored, nor can the reader conceive even the probable incidents as passing before him.

In the romance of Heliodorus, the changes of Fortune also are too frequent and too much of the same nature, as all the adventures and distresses in the book originate in the hero or heroine falling into the hands of robbers. This, it is true, gives rise to many romantic incidents, but also produces an unvaried and tiresome recurrence of similar misfortunes. In works of art, we wish for that diversity

exhibited in the appearances of nature, and require that every step should bring to view some object, or some arrangement, which has not been previously presented.

The work of the Bishop of Tricca, however, has received considerable embellishments from the *disposition* of the fable, and the artful manner in which the tale is disclosed. The gradual unfolding of the story of Theagenes and Chariclea, the suspense in which the mind is held, and the subsequent evolution of what seemed intricate, is praised by Tasso, who greatly admired, and was much indebted to Heliodorus: "Il lasciar," says he, "l'auditor sospeso procedendo dal confuso al distinto, dall'universale a' particolari è arte perpetua di Vergilio, e questa è una delle cagioni che fa piacer tanto Eliodoro."<sup>1</sup> Nor are the incidents arranged in the chronological order of the preceding romances, and of modern novels. The work begins in the middle of the story, in imitation of the epic poems of Greece and Rome, in a manner the most romantic, and best fitted to excite curiosity. Commencing immediately after the contest had taken place among the pirates, near the mouth of the Nile, for the possession of Chariclea, it represents a band of Egyptian banditti, assembled at the dawn of day on the summit of a promontory, and looking towards the sea. A vessel loaded with spoil is lying at anchor. The banks of the Nile are covered with dead bodies, and the fragments of a feast. As the robbers advance to seize the vessel, a young lady of exquisite beauty, whose appearance is charmingly described, and whom we afterwards find to be Chariclea, is represented sitting on a rock, while a young man lies wounded beside her. The narrative proceeds in the person of the author, till the meeting of Cnemon and Calasiris in the house of Nausicles, where Calasiris relates the early history of Chariclea, the rise of her affection for Theagenes, and her capture by the pirates. It must, however, be confessed, that the author has shown little judgment in making one of the characters in the romance recount the adventures of a hero and heroine. This is the most unusual and the worst species of narration that can be adopted, especially where an incipient passion is to be

<sup>1</sup> Bourdelotii Animadvers. p. 3; Cassaub. ad Athen. l. 1. c. 23.

<sup>1</sup> Opere, vol. x. p. 103. ed. Venezia.



painted. The hero or heroine, while relating their story, may naturally describe their own feelings; and an author is supposed to possess the privilege of seeing into the hearts of his characters; but it can never be imagined that a third person in a novel should be able to perceive and portray all the sentiments and emotions of the principal actors.

But the defects in the plan of the work do not end with the narrative of Calasiris. After the author has resumed the story, he destroys our interest in every event by previously informing us, that the persons concerned had dreamed it was to take place. The effect, too, of one of the most striking situations in the work is injured by a fault in disposition. When Chariclea is about to be sacrificed in Ethiopia, we feel no terror for her fate, nor that unexpected joy at her deliverance, so much extolled by Huet;<sup>1</sup> as we know she is the daughter of Hydaspes, and has her credentials along with her. This knowledge, it is true, increases the pleasure that arises from sympathy with Hydaspes, and entering into his emotions; but the interest of the romance would have been greater, had the birth of Chariclea been concealed till the conclusion. This could have been done with slight alterations, and would have formed, if I may be allowed a technical word, an *Anagnorosis*, not only to the characters in the work, but also to the reader.

Nor can the disposition of the episodes be much commended. The adventures of Cnemon, which seem to be taken from the story of Hyppolitus, have no great beauty or interest in themselves; they do not flow naturally from the main subject, and are introduced too early. The only other episode of much length is the account of the siege of Syene, and the battle between Oroondates and Hydaspes, which occupy the whole of the ninth book; and, however well described, entirely take away our concern in the fate of Chariclea, and in fact, in proportion to the excellence of the description, at the very moment when the story is approaching to a crisis, and when our interest would have been raised the highest, had our impressions remained uninterrupted.

<sup>1</sup> Sacrificii horrore inopina succedit lætitia, ob liberatam periculo præsentis puellam.—*Huet. de Origine Fabularum*, p. 37.

Next to the nature of the subject, and the arrangement of the incidents, the *Ornaments* of a romance should be chiefly considered; of these the most important are the Style, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Descriptions.

The Style of Heliodorus has been blamed as too figurative and poetical; but this censure seems chiefly applicable to those passages where he has interwoven verses of the Greek poets, from whom he has frequently borrowed. All his comparisons are said to be taken from Homer; but Sophocles, whom he often imitates, and sometimes copies, appears to have been his favourite author. Yet, considering the period in which Heliodorus lived, his style is remarkable for its elegance and perspicuity, and would not have disgraced an earlier age. "His diction," says Photius,<sup>2</sup> "is such as becomes the subject; it possesses great sweetness and simplicity, and is free from affectation; the words used are expressive, and if sometimes figurative, as might be expected, they are always perspicuous, and such as clearly exhibit the object of which the delineation is attempted. The periods, too, are constructed so as to correspond with the variations of the story; they have an agreeable alternation of length and shortness; and, finally, the whole composition is such as to have a correspondence with the narration."

In the painting of Character, Heliodorus is extremely defective; Theagenes, in particular, is a weak and insipid personage. The author, indeed, possesses a wonderful art of introducing those who are destined to bear a part in the romance, in situations calculated to excite sympathy, but as we become acquainted with them we lose all concern in their fate from their insipidity. In fact, Chariclea is the only interesting person in the work. She is represented as endued with great strength of mind, united to a delicacy of feeling, and an address which turns every situation to the best advantage. Indeed in all the ancient romances the heroine is invariably the most engaging and spirited character;—a circumstance which cannot but surprise, when we consider what an inferior part the women of Greece acted

<sup>2</sup> Cod. lxxiii. p. 158.



in society, and how little they mingled in the affairs of life.

Heliodorus has been ridiculed by the author of the *Parnassus Reformed*, for having attributed to his hero such excessive modesty, that he gave his mistress a box on the ear when she approached to embrace him. These raileries, however, are founded on misrepresentation. Theagenes met Chariclea at Memphis, but mistaking both her person and character from her wretched dress and appearance, he inflicted a blow to get rid of her importunities—an unhandsome reception, no doubt, to any woman, but which proves nothing as to his sentiments concerning Chariclea. The reader will perhaps remark, as he advances, that pirates and robbers have a principal share in the action of the succeeding Greek romances, as well as in the Ethiopic adventures. Their leaders are frequently the second characters, and occupy the part of the unsuccessful lovers of the heroine; but are not always painted as endued with any peculiar bad qualities, or as exciting horror in the other persons of the work. Nor is this representation inconsistent with the manners of the period in which the action of these romances is placed. In the early ages of Greece, piracy was not accounted a dishonourable employment. In the ancient poets, those that sail along the shore are usually accosted with the question, whether they are pirates, as if the inquiry could not be considered a reproach from those who were anxious to be informed, and as if those who were interrogated would not scruple to acknowledge their vocation. Even at the time of the Peloponnesian war, the *Ætolians*, *Acarnianians*, and some other nations, subsisted by piracy; and in the early ages of Greece, it was the occupation of all those who resided near the coast. “The Grecians,” says Thucydides, in the very beginning of his History, “took up the trade of piracy under the command of persons of the greatest ability amongst them; and for the sake of enriching such adventurers and sub-

sisting their poor, they landed and plundered by surprise unfortified places, or scattered villages. Nor was this an employment of reproach, but rather an instrument of glory. Some people of the continent are even at the present day a proof of this, as they still attribute honour to such exploits, if performed with due respect and humanity.”

Heliodorus abounds in Descriptions, some of which are extremely interesting. His accounts of many of the customs of the Egyptians are said to be very correct, and he describes particular places with an accuracy which gives an appearance of reality to his romance. He seldom, however, delineates the great outlines of nature, or touches on those accidents which render scenery sublime or beautiful—he chiefly delights in minute descriptions of the pomp of embassies and processions, and, as was natural in a priest, of sacrifices, or religious rites. These might be tiresome, or even disgusting, in a modern novel, but the representation of manners, of customs, and of ceremonies, is infinitely more valuable in an old romance, than pictures of general nature.

There can be no doubt that Theagenes and Chariclea has supplied with materials many of the early writers of Romance. It was imitated in the composition of *Achilles Tatius*, and subsequent Greek fablers; and although I cannot trace the resemblance which is said to exist between the work of Heliodorus, and that species of modern novel first introduced by Richardson,<sup>1</sup> it was unquestionably the model of those heroic fictions, which, through the writings of *Gomberville* and *Scuderi*, became for a considerable period so popular and prevalent in France. The modern Italian poets have also availed themselves of the incidents that occur in the work of Heliodorus.

Thus the circumstances of the birth and early life of *Clorinda*, related by *Arsete* in the twelfth canto of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, are taken, with hardly any variation, from the story of the infancy of Chariclea.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Barbauld's Preface to Richardson.

<sup>2</sup> Resse già l'Etiochia, e forse regge  
Senapo ancor, con fortunato impero.  
Quivi Io pagan fui servo e fui tra gregge  
D'ancelle avvolto in femminil mestiero,

Ministro fatto della regia Moglie,  
Che bruna è sì, ma il bruno il bel non toglie.

D' Una pietosa istoria, e di devote  
Figure la sua stanza era dipinta.  
Vergine bianca il bel volto, e le gote



proposed sacrifice and subsequent discovery of the birth of Chariclea have likewise been imitated in the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini, and through it in the *Astrea* of D'Urfé.

Racine had at one time intended writing a drama on the subject of this romance, a plan which has been accomplished by Dorat, in his tragedy of *Theagenes and Chariclea*, which was acted at Paris in the year 1762. It also suggested the plot of an old English tragicomedy by an unknown author, entitled *The Strange Discovery*.

Hardy, the French poet, wrote eight tragedies in verse on the same subject, without materially altering the ground-work of the romance,—an instance of literary prodigality which is perhaps unexampled. The story, though well fitted for narrative, is unsuitable for tragedy, which indeed is acknowledged by Dorat in his preliminary discourse. “I was seized,” observes he, “with enthusiasm; I raised a tottering edifice with romantic proportions, and wrote with inconceivable warmth a cold and languid drama.”

If we may judge by success, the events of the romance are better adapted to furnish materials to the artist than the tragic poet. Two of the most striking incidents that occur in the work of Heliodorus have been finely delineated by Raphael, in separate paintings, in which he was assisted by Julio Romano. In one he has seized the moment when Theagenes and Chariclea meet in the temple of Delphos, and Chariclea presents Theagenes with a torch to kindle the sacrifice. In the other he has chosen for his subject the capture of the Tyrian ship, in which Calasiris was conducting Theagenes and Chariclea to the coast of Sicily. The vessel is supposed to

have already struck to the pirates, and Chariclea is exhibited, by the light of the moon, in a suppliant posture, imploring Trachinus that she might not be separated from her lover and Calasiris.

Theagenes and Chariclea was received with much applause in the age in which it appeared. The popularity of a work invariably produces imitation;—and hence the style of composition which had recently been introduced, was soon adopted by various writers.

Of these, Achilles Tatius<sup>1</sup> comes next to Heliodorus in time, and perhaps in merit. Though in many respects he has imitated his predecessor, it may in the first place be remarked, that he has adopted a mode of narrative totally different. The author introduces himself as gazing at the picture of Europa, which was placed in the temple of Venus in Sidon. While thus employed, he is accosted by Clitophon, who, without previous acquaintance, relates to him his whole adventures, which are comprised in eight books. This way of introducing the story is no doubt very absurd, but when once it is commenced, the plan of narration is preferable to that part of Theagenes and Chariclea which is told by an inferior character in the work.

The following is the story of the romance:—Clitophon resided at his father's house in Tyre, where his cousin Leucippe came to seek refuge from a war which was at that time carried on against her native country. These young relatives became mutually enamoured, and Leucippe's mother having discovered Clitophon one night in the chamber of her daughter, the lovers resolved to avoid the effects of her anger by flight. Accompanied by Clineas, a friend of Clitophon, they sailed

Vermiglia è quivi presso un Drago avvinta.  
Coll asta il monstro il cavalier percuote;  
Giace la fera nel suo sangue estinta:  
Quivi sovente ella s'atterra, e spiega  
Le sue tacite colpe, e piange, e prega.

Ingravida frattanto, ed espon fuori  
(E tu fosti colei) candida figlia:  
Si turba, e degl' insoliti colori,  
Quasi d'un nuovo mostro, ha maraviglia;  
Ma perche il Re conosce, e i suoi furori,  
Celargli il parto-alfin si riconsiglia;  
Ch' egli avria dal candor, che in te si vede,  
Argomentato in lei non bianca fede.

Ed in tua vece una fanciulla nera  
Pensa mostrargli poco innanzi nata.  
E perche fu la torre, ove chius' era,  
Dalle donne, e da me solo abitata;  
A me, cha le fui servo, e con sincera  
Mente l'amai ti diè non battezzata:  
Ne già poteva allor battesimo darti,  
Che l'uso nol sostien di quelle parti.

Piangendo a me ti porse, e mi commise,  
Ch' io lontana a nudrir ti conducessi.

*Gerus. Liber.* canto 12, st. 21, &c.

<sup>1</sup> *Ἀχιλλεύς Τατίς Ἀλεξανδρείας, Ερωτικὸν βιβλίον οκτὰ*  
Ed. Bodon. Lipsiæ, 1776.—See Appendix, No. 3.



in the first instance for Berytus. A conversation which took place between Clitophon and Clinias during the voyage, seems to have been suggested by the singular disquisition contained in the *Ἐρωτις*, attributed to Lucian, and usually published in his works. After a short stay at Berytus, the fugitives set out for Alexandria: the vessel was wrecked on the third day of the voyage, but Clitophon and Leucippe, adhering with great presence of mind to the same plank, were driven on shore near Pelusium, in Egypt. At this place they hired a vessel to carry them to Alexandria, but, while sailing up the Nile, they were seized by a band of robbers who infested the banks of the river. The robbers were soon after attacked by the Egyptian forces, commanded by Charmides, to whom Clitophon escaped during the heat of the engagement—Leucippe, however, remained in the power of the enemy, who, with much solemnity, apparently ripped up our heroine close to the army of Charmides, and in the sight of her lover, who was prevented from interfering by a deep fosse which separated the two armies. The ditch having been filled up, Clitophon in the course of the night went to immolate himself on the spot where Leucippe had been interred. He arrived at her tomb, but was prevented from executing his purpose by the sudden appearance of his servant Satyrus, and of Menelaus, a young man who had sailed with him in the vessel from Berytus. These two persons had also escaped from the shipwreck, and had afterwards fallen into the power of the robbers. By them Leucippe had been accommodated with a false *uterus*, made of sheep's skin, which gave rise to the *deceptio visus* above related. At the command of Menelaus, Leucippe issued from the tomb, and proceeded with Clitophon and Menelaus to the quarters of Charmides. In a short time this commander became enamoured of Leucippe, as did also Gorgias, one of his officers. Gorgias gave her a potion calculated to inspire her with reciprocal passion, but which, being too strong, affected her with a species of madness of a very indecorous character.<sup>1</sup> She is cured, however, by Chaereas,

another person who had fallen in love with her, and had discovered the secret of the potion from the servant of Gorgias. Taking Chaereas along with them, Clitophon and Leucippe sail for Alexandria. Soon after their arrival, Leucippe was carried off from the neighbourhood of that place, and hurried on board a vessel by a troop of banditti employed by Chaereas. Clitophon pursued the vessel, but when just coming up with it, he saw the head of a person he mistook for Leucippe struck off by the robbers. Disheartened by this incident, he relinquished the pursuit and returned to Alexandria. There he was informed that Melite, a rich Ephesian widow at that time residing in Alexandria, had fallen in love with him. This intelligence he received from his old friend Clinias, who, after the wreck of the vessel in which he had embarked with Clitophon, had got on shore by the usual expedient of a plank, and now suggested to his friend that he should avail himself of the predilection of Melite. In compliance with this suggestion, he set sail with her for Ephesus, but persisted in postponing the nuptials till they should reach that place, spite of the most vehement importunities on the part of the widow. On their arrival at Ephesus the marriage took place, but, before Melite's object in the marriage had been accomplished, Clitophon discovered Leucippe among his wife's slaves; and Thersander, Melite's husband, who was supposed to be drowned, arrived at Ephesus. Clitophon was instantly confined by the enraged husband; but, on condition of putting the last seal to the now invalid marriage, he escaped by the intervention of Melite. He had not proceeded far when he was overtaken by Thersander, and brought back to confinement. Thersander, of course, fell in love with Leucippe, but not being able to engage her affections, he brought two actions; one declaratory, that Leucippe was his slave, and a prosecution against Clitophon for marrying his wife. The debates on both sides are insufferably tiresome. The priest of Diana, with whom Leucippe had taken refuge, lavishes much abuse on Thersander, which is returned on

<sup>1</sup> During this state of mental alienation she commits many acts of extravagance. She boxes her lover on the ear, repulses Menelaus with her feet,

and at last quarrels with her petticoats; ἡ δὲ προσεπαλαίειν ἡμῖν εὐδὲν φροντίζουσα κρύπτειν ὅσα γυνὴ μὴ ὀρεῖσθαι θίλει.— L. 4. c. 9.



his part with equal volubility. Leucippe is at last subjected to a trial of chastity in the cave of Diana, from which the sweetest music issued when entered by those who resembled its goddess. Never were notes heard so melodious as those by which Leucippe was vindicated. Thersander was of course nonsuited, and retired loaded with infamy. Leucippe then related that it was a woman dressed in her clothes, whose head had been struck off by the banditti, in order to deter Clitophon from farther pursuit, but that a quarrel having arisen among them on her account, Chaereas was slain, and, after his death, she was sold by the other pirates to Sosthenes. By him she had been purchased for Thersander, in whose service she had remained till discovered by Clitophon.

In this romance many of the descriptions are borrowed from Philostratus, and the Hero and Leander of Musaeus. Some of the events have also been taken from Heliodorus. Like that author, Tatius makes frequent use of robbers, pirates, and dreams; but the general style of his work is totally different. If there be less sweetness and interest than in Theagenes and Chariclea, there is more bustle in the action. A number of the amorous stratagems, too, are original and well imagined—such as Clitophon's discourse on love with Satyrus, in the hearing of Leucippe: and the beautiful incident of the bee, which has been adopted by D'Urfé, and by Tasso in his *Aminta*, where Sylvia having pretended to cure Phyllis, whom a bee had stung, by kissing her, Aminta perceiving this, feigns that he too had been stung, in order that Sylvia, pitying his pain, might apply a similar remedy.<sup>1</sup> Among these devices may be mentioned the petition of Melite to Leucippe, whom she believes to be a Thessalian, to pro-

cure her herbs for a potion that may gain her the affections of Clitophon. The sacrifice, too, of Leucippe by the robbers in the presence of her lover, is happily imagined, were not the solution of the enigma so wretched. As the work advances, however, it must be confessed, that it gradually decreases in interest, and that these agreeable incidents are more thinly scattered. Towards the conclusion it becomes insufferably tiresome, and the author scruples not to violate all verisimilitude in the events related.

Indeed, through the whole romance, want of probability seems the great defect. Nothing can be more absurd or unnatural than the false uterus—nothing can be worse imagined than the vindication of the heroine in the cave of Diana, which is the final solution of the romance. When it is necessary for the story that Thersander should be informed who Leucippe is, the author makes him overhear a soliloquy, in which she reports to herself a full account of her genealogy, and an abridgement of her whole adventures. A soliloquy can never be properly introduced, unless the speaker is under the influence of some strong passion, or reasons on some important subject; but as Heliodorus borrowed from Sophocles, so Tatius is said to have imitated Euripides. From him he may have taken this unnatural species of soliloquy, as this impropriety exists in almost all the introductions to the tragedies of that poet.

Tatius has been much blamed for the immorality of his romance, and it must be acknowledged that there are particular passages which are extremely exceptionable; yet, however odious some of these may be considered, the general moral tendency of the story is good;—a remark which may be extended to all the Greek romances. Tatius

<sup>1</sup> Fingendo, ch' un ape avesse morso  
Il mio labro di sotto, incominciai  
A lamentarmi di cotal maniera,  
Che quella medicina, che la lingua  
Non richiedeva, il volto richiedeva.  
La semplicetta Silvia,  
Pietosa del mio male,  
S' offri di dar aita  
A la finta ferita, Ahi lasso, e fece  
Piu cupa, e piu mortale  
La mia paga verace.  
Quando le labra sue  
Giunse a le labra mie,

Ne l' api d' alcun fiore  
Coglion sì dolce il mel, ch' allhora Io colsi  
Da quelle fresche Rose  
Ma mentre al cor scendeva  
Quella dolcezza mista  
D' un secreto veleno,  
Tal diletto n' havea,  
Che fingendo ch' ancor non mi passasse  
Il dolor di quel morso,  
Fei sì, ch' ella piu volte  
Vi replicò l' incanto.

*Aminta*, act 1. sc. 2.



punishes his hero and heroine for eloping from their fathers' house, and afterwards rewards them for their long fidelity.

The Clitophon and Leucippe of Tatius does not seem to have been composed like Theagenes and Chariclea, as a romance equally interesting and well written throughout, but as a species of patch-work, in different places of which the author might exhibit the variety of his talents. At one time he is anxious to show his taste in painting and sculpture; at another, his acquaintance with natural history; and towards the end of the book, his skill in declamation. But his principal excellence lies in descriptions; and though these are too luxuriant, they are in general beautiful, the objects being at once well selected, and so painted as to form in the mind of the reader a distinct and lively image. As examples of his merit in this way may be instanced, his description of a garden (l. i. c. 16), and of a tempest followed by a shipwreck (l. iii. c. 234). We may also mention his accounts of the pictures of Europa (l. i. c. 1), of Andromeda (l. iii. c. 7), and Prometheus (l. iii. c. 8), in which his descriptions and criticisms are executed with very considerable taste and feeling. Indeed, the remarks on these paintings form a presumption of the advanced state of the art at the period in which Tatius wrote, or at least of the estimation in which it was held, and afford matter of much curious speculation to connoisseurs and artists.

Writers, however, are apt to indulge themselves in enlarging where they excel; accordingly the descriptions of Tatius are too numerous, and sometimes very absurdly introduced. Thus Clitophon, when mentioning the preparations for his marriage with a woman he disliked, presents the reader with a long description of a neck-lace which was purchased for her, and also enters into a detail concerning the origin of dying purple (l. ii. c. 11); he likewise introduces very awkwardly an account of various zoological curiosities (l. ii. c. 14). Indeed, he seems particularly fond of natural history, and gives very animated and correct delineations of the hippopotamus (l. iv. c. 2, &c.), of the elephant (l. iv. c. 4), and the crocodile (l. iv. c. 19).

<sup>1</sup> Huet. p. 40, Boder. praef. p. 15.

The description of the rise and progress of the passion of Clitophon for Leucippe is extremely well executed. Of this there is nothing in the romance of Heliodorus. Theagenes and Chariclea at first sight are violently and mutually enamoured; in Tatius we have more of the restless agitation of love and the arts of courtship. Indeed, this is by much the best part of the Clitophon and Leucippe, as the author discloses very considerable acquaintance with the human heart. This knowledge also appears in the sentiments scattered through the work, though it must be confessed that in many of his remarks he is apt to subtilize and refine too much.

In point of style, Tatius is said by Huet and other critics<sup>1</sup> to excel Heliodorus, and all the writers of Greek romance. His language has been chiefly applauded for its conciseness, ease, and simplicity. Photius, who wrote tolerable Greek himself, and must have been a better judge than any later critic, observes, "with regard to diction and composition, Tatius seems to me to excel. When he employs figurative language, it is clear and natural: his sentences are precise and limpid, and such as by their sweetness greatly delight the ear."<sup>2</sup>

In the delineation of character Tatius is still more defective than Heliodorus.—Clitophon, the principal person in the romance, is a wretchedly weak and pusillanimous being; he twice allows himself to be beaten by Thersander, without resistance,—he has neither sense nor courage, nor indeed any virtue except uncommon fidelity to his mistress. She is a much more interesting, and is indeed a heroic, character.

We now proceed to the analysis of a romance different in its nature from the works already mentioned; and of a species which may be distinguished by the appellation of *Pastoral* romance.

It may be conjectured with much probability, that pastoral composition sometimes expressed the devotion, and sometimes formed the entertainment, of the first generations of mankind. The sacred writings sufficiently inform us that it existed among the eastern nations during the earliest ages. Rural images

<sup>2</sup> Photius, Bib. Cod. lxxxvii. p. 206.



are every where scattered through the Old Testament: and the Song of Solomon in particular, beautifully delineates the charms of a country life, while it paints the most amiable affections of the mind, and the sweetest scenery of nature. A number of passages of Theocritus bear a striking resemblance to descriptions in the inspired pastoral; and many critics have believed that he had studied its beauties, and transferred them to his eclogues. Theocritus was imitated in his own dialect by Moschus and Bion; and Virgil, taking advantage of a different language, copied yet rivalled the Sicilian. The *Bucolics* of the Roman bard seem to have been considered as precluding all attempts of the same kind; for, if we except the feeble efforts of Calpurnius, and his contemporary Nemesianus, who lived in the third century, no subsequent specimen of pastoral poetry was, as far as I know, produced till the revival of literature.

It was during this interval that Longus, a Greek sophist,<sup>1</sup> who is said to have lived soon after the age of Tatius, wrote his pastoral romance of *Daphnis and Chloe*, which is the earliest, and by far the finest, example that has appeared of this species of composition. Availing himself of the beauties of the pastoral poets who preceded him, he has added to their simplicity of style, and charming pictures of Nature, a story which possesses considerable interest, and of which the following abstract is presented to the reader.

In the neighbourhood of Mytilene, the principal city of Lesbos, Lamon, a goat-herd, as he was one day tending his flock, discovered an infant sucking one of his goats with surprising dexterity. He takes home the child, and presents him to his wife Myrtale; at the same time he delivers to her a purple mantle with which the boy was adorned, and a little sword with an ivory hilt, which was lying by his side. Lamon, having no children of his own, resolves to bring up the foundling, and bestows on him the pastoral name of *Daphnis*.

About two years after this occurrence, Dryas, a neighbouring shepherd, finds in the cave of the nymphs, which is beautifully described in the romance, a female infant, nursed by one of his ewes. The child is

brought to the cottage of Dryas, receives the name of *Chloe*, and is cherished by the old man as if she had been his daughter.

When *Daphnis* had reached the age of fifteen, and *Chloe* that of twelve, Lamon and Dryas, their reputed fathers, had corresponding dreams on the same night. The nymphs of the cave in which *Chloe* had been discovered appear to each of the old shepherds, delivering *Daphnis* and *Chloe* to a winged boy, with a bow and arrows, who commands that *Daphnis* should be sent to keep goats, and the girl to tend the sheep: *Daphnis* and *Chloe* have not long entered on their new employments, which they exercise with a care of their flocks, increased by a knowledge of the circumstances of their infancy, when chance brings them to pasture on the same spot. It was then, says the romance, the beginning of spring, and every species of flower bloomed through the woods, the meadows and mountains.—The tender flocks sported around—the lambs skipped on the hills—the bees hummed through the vallies—and the birds filled the groves with their song. *Daphnis* collects the wandering sheep of *Chloe*, and *Chloe* drives from the rocks the goats of *Daphnis*. They make reeds in common, and share together their milk and their wine;—their youth, their beauty, the season of the year, every thing tends to inspire them with a mutual passion: at length *Daphnis* having one day fallen into a covered pit which was dug for the wolf, and being considerably hurt, receives from *Chloe* a kiss, which serves as the first fuel to the flame of love.

*Chloe* had another admirer, Dorco, the cow-herd, who having in vain requested her in marriage from Dryas, her reputed father, resolves to carry her off by force; for this purpose he disguises himself as a wolf, and lurks among some bushes near a place where *Chloe* used to pasture her sheep. In this garb he is discovered and attacked by the dogs, who entered into his frolic with unexpected alacrity, but is preserved from being torn to pieces by the timely arrival of *Daphnis*. From the example of Dorco this became a favourite stratagem among pastoral characters. In the *Pastor Fido* (act iv. sc. ii.) Dorinda disguises herself as a wolf, and the

<sup>1</sup> Appendix, No. 4.



troubadour Vidal was hunted down in consequence of a similar experiment.

Spring was now at an end—summer beamed forth and all Nature flourished—the trees were loaded with fruits, the fields were covered with corn, and the woods were filled with melody—every thing tended to inspire pleasure—the sweet hum of the cicada, the fragrance of the ripening apples, and the bleating of the sheep. The gliding streams were heard as if they modulated the song, and the breezes rustling among the pines seemed the breath of the flute.

In the beginning of autumn some Tyrian pirates having landed on the island, seize the oxen of Dorco, and carry off Daphnis, whom they meet sauntering on the shore. Chloe hearing Daphnis calling for assistance from the ship, flies for help to Dorco, and reaches him when he is just expiring of the wounds inflicted by the corsairs of Tyre. Before his death he gives her his pipe, on which, after she had closed his eyes, she plays according to his instructions a certain tune (probably the *Ronce des Vaches*), which being heard by the oxen in the Tyrian vessel, they all leap overboard and upset the ship. The pirates being loaded with heavy armour are drowned, but Daphnis swims safe to shore.

Here ends the first book ; and in the second the author proceeds to relate, that during autumn Daphnis and Chloe were engaged in the labours, or rather the delights, of the vintage.<sup>1</sup> After the grapes had been gathered and pressed, and the new wine treasured in casks, having returned to feed their flocks, they are accosted one day by an old man named Philetas, who tells them a long story of seeing Cupid in a garden, adding, that Daphnis and Chloe were to be dedicated to his service ; the lovers naturally inquire who Cupid is, for, although they had felt his influence, they were ignorant of his name. Philetas describes his power and his attributes, and points out the remedy for the pains he inflicts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A great deal is said in this romance concerning the vintage. Lesbos had in all times been celebrated for its wine, which was scarcely of an intoxicating quality.

*Hic innocentis pocula Lesbii  
Duces sub umbra ; nec Semeleius*

The instructions of this venerable old man to the lovers were sufficiently explicit, but, spite of the lesson they had received, they appear to have made very little advancement. Their progress was on one occasion interrupted by the arrival of certain youths of Methymnæa, who landed near that part of the island where Daphnis fed his flocks, in order to enjoy the pleasures of the chase during vintage. The twigs, by which the ship of these sportsmen was tied to the shore, had been eaten through by some goats, and the vessel had been carried away by the tide and the land breeze. Its crew having proceeded up the country in search of the owner of the animals, and not having found him, seize Daphnis as a substitute, and lash him severely, till other shepherds come to his assistance. Philetas is appointed judge between Daphnis and the Methymnæans, but the latter refusing to abide by his decision, which was unfavourable to them, are driven from the territory. They return, however, next day, and carry off Chloe, with a great quantity of booty. Having landed at a place of shelter which lay in the course of their voyage, they pass the night in festivity, but at dawn of day they are terrified by the unlooked-for appearance of Pan, who threatens them with being drowned before they arrive at their intended place of destination, unless they set Chloe at liberty. Through this respectable interposition, Chloe is allowed to return home, and is speedily restored to the arms of Daphnis.—The grateful lovers sing hymns to the nymphs. On the following day they sacrifice to Pan, and hang a goat's skin on a pine adjoining his image. The feast which follows this ceremony is attended by all the old shepherds in the neighbourhood, who recount the adventures of their youth, and their children dance to the sound of the pipe.

The third book commences with the approach of winter, and from the description of that season which is given in the romance,

*Cum Marte confundet Thyoneus  
Prælia.—*

For the qualities of Lesbian wine, see Athenæus, lib. 1. c. 22. and Aul. Gellius, 13. c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Φιλημα, περιβολη, και συνκατακληθῆναι γυμνοῖς σώμασι.



it would appear that at the period of its composition the temperature of the Lesbian climate was colder than it is now represented by travellers. We are told in the pastoral, that early in winter a sudden fall of snow shuts up all the roads, the peasants are confined to their cottages, and the earth nowhere appears except on the brinks of rivers, or sides of fountains. No one leads forth his flocks to pasture: but by a blazing fire some twist cords for the net, some plait goat's hair, and others make snares for the birds; the hogs are fed with acorns in the sty, the sheep with leaves in the folds, and the oxen with chaff in the stalls.

The season of the year precludes the interviews of Daphnis and Chloe. They could no longer meet in the fields, and Daphnis was afraid to excite suspicion by visiting the object of his passion at the cottage of Dryas. He ventures, however, to approach its vicinity, under pretext of laying snares for birds. Engaged in this employment, he waits a long time without any person appearing from the house. At length, when about to depart, Dryas himself comes out in pursuit of a dog who had run off with the family dinner. He perceives Daphnis with his game, and accordingly, as a profitable speculation, invites him into the cottage. The birds he had caught are prepared for supper; a second cup is filled, a new fire is kindled, and Daphnis is asked to remain next day to attend a sacrifice to be performed to Bacchus. By accepting the invitation, he for some time longer enjoys the society of Chloe. The lovers part, praying for the revival of spring; but while the winter lasted, Daphnis frequently visits the habitation of Dryas.

When spring returns, Daphnis and Chloe are the first to lead out their flocks to pasture. Their ardour when they meet in the fields is increased by long absence, and the season of the year, but their hearts remain innocent;—a purity which the author still imputes not to virtue, but to ignorance.

Chromis, an old man in the neighbourhood, had married a young woman called Lycaenium, who falls in love with Daphnis; she becomes acquainted with the perplexity in which he is placed with regard to Chloe, and

resolves at once to gratify her own passion, and to free him from his embarrassment.

Daphnis, however, still hesitates to practise with Chloe the lesson he had received from Lycaenium; and the reader is again tired with the repetition of preludes, for which he can no longer find an excuse.

In the fourth book we are told that, towards the close of summer, a fellow-servant of Lamon arrives from Mytilene, to announce that the lord of the territory on which the reputed fathers of Daphnis and Chloe pastured their flocks, would be with them at the approach of vintage.

Lamon prepares every thing for his reception with much assiduity, but bestows particular attention on the embellishment of a spacious garden which adjoined his cottage, and of which the different parts are described as having been arranged in a manner fitted to inspire all the agreeable emotions which the art of gardening can produce. "It was," says the author, "the length of a *stadium*, and the breadth of four *plethra*, was in a lofty situation, and formed an oblong. It was planted with all sorts of trees; with apples, myrtles, pears, pomegranates, figs, olives, and the tall vine, which, reclining on the pear and apple trees, seemed to vie with them in its fruits. Nor were the forest trees, as the plane, the pine, and the cypress, less abundant. To them clung not the vine, but the ivy, whose large and ripening berry emulated the grape. These forest trees surrounded the fruit-bearers, as if they had been a shelter formed by art; and the whole was protected by a slight enclosure. The garden was divided by paths—the stems of the trees were far separated from each other, but the branches entwined above, formed a continued arbour: here, too, were beds of flowers, some of which the earth bore spontaneously, while others were produced by cultivation;—roses, hyacinths, were planted and tended; the ground of itself yielded the violet and the narcissus. Here were shade in summer, sweetness of flowers in spring, the pleasures of vintage in autumn, and fruits in every season of the year. Hence, too, the plain could be seen, and flocks feeding; the sea also, and the ships sailing over it; so that all these might be numbered among the delights of the garden. In the centre there was a temple to



Bacchus, and an altar erected; the altar was girt with ivy—the temple was surrounded with palm: within were represented the triumphs and loves of the god.”

On this garden Daphnis had placed his chief hopes of conciliating the good-will of his master, and through his favour of being united to Chloe; for it would appear the consent of parties was not sufficient for this, and that in Greece, as among the serfs in Russia, the finest gratification of the heart was dependent on the will of a master. Lampis, a cow-herd, who had asked Chloe in marriage from Dryas, and had been refused, resolves on the destruction of this garden. Accordingly, when it is dark, he tears out the shrubs by the roots, and tramples on the flowers. Dreadful is the consternation of Lamon, in beholding on the following morning the havoc that had been made. Towards evening his terror is increased by the appearance of Eudromus, one of his master's servants, who gives notice that he would be with them in three days.

Astylus (the son of Dionysophanes, proprietor of the territory) arrives first, and promises to obtain pardon from his father of the mischance that had happened to the garden. Astylus is accompanied by a parasite, Gnatho, who is smitten with a friendship, *a la Grecque*, for Daphnis: this having come to the knowledge of Lamon, who overhears the parasite ask and obtain Daphnis as a page from Astylus, he conceives it incumbent on him to reveal to Dionysophanes, who had by this time arrived, the mysteries attending the infancy of Daphnis. He, at the same time, produces the ornaments he had found with the child, on which Dionysophanes instantly recognises his son. Having married early in youth, he had a daughter and two sons, but being a prudent man, and satisfied with this stock, he had exposed his fourth child, Daphnis; a measure which had become somewhat less expedient, as his daughter and one of his sons died immediately after on the same day, and Astylus alone survived.

The change in the situation of Daphnis does not alter his attachment to Chloe. He begs her in marriage of his father, who, being informed of the circumstances of her infancy, invites all the distinguished persons in the neighbourhood to a festival, at which the

articles of dress found along with Chloe are exhibited. This was not his own scheme, but had been suggested to him in a dream by the nymphs; for in the pastoral of Longus, as in most other Greek romances, the characters are only

Tunc recta scientes cum nil scire valent.

The success of this device fully answers expectation; Chloe being acknowledged as his daughter by Megacles, one of the guests, who was now in a prosperous condition, but rivaling his friend Dionysophanes in paternal tenderness, had exposed his child while in difficulties. There being now no farther obstacle to the union of Daphnis and Chloe, their marriage is solemnized with rustic pomp, and they lead through the rest of their days a happy and a pastoral life.

In some respects a prose romance is better adapted than the eclogue or drama to pastoral composition. The eclogue is confined within narrow limits, and must terminate before interest can be excited. A series of Bucolics, where two or more shepherds are introduced contending for the reward of a crook or a kid, and at most descanting for a short while on similar topics, resembles a collection of the first scenes of a number of comedies, of which the commencement can only be listened to as unfolding the subsequent action. The drama is, no doubt, a better form of pastoral writing than detached eclogues, but at the same time does not well accord with rustic manners and description. In dramatic composition, the representation of strong passions is best calculated to produce interest or emotion, but the feelings of rural existence should be painted as tranquil and calm. In choosing a prose romance as the vehicle of pastoral writing, Longus has adopted a form that may include all the beauties arising from the description of rustic manners, or the scenery of nature, and which, as far as the incidents of rural life admit, may interest by an agreeable fable, and delight by judicious alternation of narrative and dialogue.

Longus has also avoided many of the faults into which his modern imitators have fallen, and which have brought this style of composition into so much disrepute; his characters never express the conceits of affected gallantry, nor involve themselves in abstract



reasoning; and he has not loaded his romance with those long and constantly recurring episodes, which in the *Diana of Montemayor*, and the *Astrea of D'Urfé*, fatigue the attention, and render us indifferent to the principal story. Nor does he paint that chimerical state of society, termed the golden age, in which the characteristic *traits* of rural life are erased, but attempts to please by a genuine imitation of Nature, and by descriptions of the manners, the rustic occupations, or rural enjoyments, of the inhabitants of the country where the scene of the pastoral is laid.

Huet, who seems to have considered the chief merit of a romance to consist in commencing in the middle of the story, has remarked, I think unjustly, that it is a great defect in the plan of this pastoral, that it begins with the infancy of the hero and heroine, and carries on the story beyond the period of their marriage.<sup>1</sup> The author might, perhaps, have been blameable had he dwelt long on these periods; but, in fact, the romance concludes with the nuptials of Daphnis and Chloe; and the reader is merely told in a few lines that they lived a pastoral life, and had a son and daughter. Nor, if the reader be interested in the characters of the preceding story, is it unpleasant for him to hear in general terms, when it comes to an end, how these persons passed their lives, and whether their fortune was stable. I do not see that in a pastoral romance, even a more ample description of conjugal felicity would have been so totally disgusting as the critic seems to imagine; far less is an account of the childhood of the characters objectionable, even where it is more minute than that given by Longus.

The pastoral is in general very beautifully written;—the style, though it has been cen-

sured on account of the reiteration of the same forms of expression, and as betraying the sophist in some passages by a play on words, and affected antithesis, is considered as the purest specimen of the Greek language produced in that late period;<sup>2</sup> the descriptions of rural scenery and rural occupations are extremely pleasing, and, if I may use the expression, there is a sort of amenity and calm diffused over the whole romance. This, indeed, may be considered as the chief excellence in a pastoral; since we are not so much allured by the feeding of sheep as by the stillness of the country. In all our active pursuits, the end proposed is tranquillity, and even when we lose the hope of happiness, we are attracted by that of repose;—hence we are soothed and delighted with its representation, and fancy we partake of the pleasure.

In some respects, however, this romance, although its excellencies are many, is extremely defective. It displays little variety, except what arises from the vicissitude of the seasons. The courtship of Daphnis is to the last degree monotonous, and the conversations between the lovers extremely insipid. The mythological tales also are totally uninteresting, and sometimes not very happily introduced.

Although the general moral attempted to be inculcated in the romance is not absolutely bad, yet there are particular passages so extremely reprehensible, that I know nothing like them in almost any work whatever. This depravity is the less excusable, as it was the professed design of the author to paint a state of the most perfect innocence.

There can be no doubt that the pastoral of Longus had a considerable influence on the style and incidents of the subsequent Greek

<sup>1</sup> L'économie mal entendue de sa fable est un défaut encore plus essentiel. Il commence grossièrement, à la naissance de ses bergers, et ne finit pas même à leur mariage. Il étend sa narration jusqu'à leurs enfants et à leur vieillesse; and, again, C'est sortir entièrement du vrai caractère de cette espèce d'écrits: il les faut finir au jour des noces, et se taire sur les suites du mariage. Une héroïne de Roman grosse et accouchée est un étrange personnage.—*Huet de l'Origine des Romans*.

<sup>2</sup> Son style est simple, aisé, naturel, et concis sans obscurité; ses expressions sont pleines de vivacité et de feu, il produit avec esprit, il peint avec agrément,

et dispose ses images avec adresse.—*De l'Orig. des Rom.*

Longi oratio pura, candida, suavis, mutis articulis membrisque concisa et tamen numerosa, sine ullis salibus melle dulcior profluit, tanquam amnis argenteus virentibus utrinque sylvis inumbratus; et ita florens, ita picta, ita expolita est ut in ea, verborum omnes, omnes sententiarum illigentur lepores. Translationes cæteraque dicendi lumina ita apte disponit ut pictores colorum varietatem.—*Villoison proem*. Longus is also called by Muretus, dulcissimus ac suavissimus scriptor; and by Scaliger, auctor amænissimus, et eo melior quo simplicior.



romances, particularly those of Eustathius and Theodorus Prodromus; but its effects on modern pastorals, particularly those which appeared in Italy during the sixteenth century, is a subject of more difficulty. Huet is of opinion, that it was not only the model of the *Astrea* of D'Urfé, and the *Diana* of Montemayor, but gave rise to the Italian dramatic pastoral. This opinion is combated by Villoison, on the grounds that the first edition of Longus was not published till 1598, and that Tasso died in the year 1595. It is true that the first *Greek* edition of Longus was not published till 1598, but there was a French translation by Amyot, which appeared in 1559, and one in Latin verse by Gambara in 1569, either of which might have been seen by Tasso. But although this argument brought forward by Villoison be of little avail, he is probably right in the general notion he has adopted, that *Daphnis and Chloe* was not the origin of the pastoral drama. The *Sacrificio* of Agostino Beccari, which was the earliest specimen of this style of composition, and was acted at Ferrara in 1554, was written previous to the appearance of any edition or version of Longus. Nor is there any similarity in the story or incidents of the *Aminta* to those in *Daphnis and Chloe*, which should lead us to imagine that the Greek romance had been imitated by Tasso.

It bears, however, a stronger likeness to the more recent dramatic pastorals of Italy. These are frequently founded on the exposure of children, who, after being brought up as shepherds by reputed fathers, are discovered by their real parents by means of tokens fastened to them when they were abandoned. There is also a considerable resemblance between the story of *Daphnis and Chloe* and that of the *Gentle Shepherd*: the plot was suggested to Ramsay by one of his friends, who seems to have taken it from the Greek pastoral. Marmontel, too, in his *Annette and Lubin*, has imitated the simplicity and inexperience of the lovers of Longus. But of all modern writers the author who has most closely followed this romance is Gessner. In his *Idylls* there is the same poetical prose, the same beautiful rural descriptions, and the same innocence and simplicity in the rustic characters. In his pastoral of *Daphnis*, the scene of which

is laid in Greece, he has painted, like Longus, the early and innocent attachment of a shepherdess and swain, and has only embellished his picture by the incidents that arise from rural occupations, and the revolutions of the year.

We shall conclude this article with remarking, that the story of *Daphnis and Chloe* is related in the person of the author. He feigns, that while hunting in Lesbos, he saw in a grove consecrated to the nymphs a most beautiful picture, in which appeared children exposed, lovers plighting their faith, and incursions of pirates—that, having found an interpreter of this painting, he had expressed in writing what it represented, and produced a gift to Cupid, to Pan, and the nymphs; but which would be pleasing to all men, a medicine to the sick, a solace to the afflicted, which would remind him, who had felt the power of love, of his sweetest enjoyments, and teach the inexperienced the nature and happiness of that passion.

Although the work of Longus was much admired by his contemporaries, and although many of the incidents were adopted in the fictitious narratives by which it was succeeded, none of the subsequent Greek fablers attempted to write pastoral romance, but chose Heliodorus, or rather Tatius, as their model.

Chariton, the earliest of these imitators, has been considered as inferior to Tatius in point of style, in which he exhibits a good deal of the sophist, but he far excels him in the probability and simplicity of his incidents—he also surpasses him in the general conduct of his work, since, as the romance advances, the interest increases to the end, and the fate of the characters is carefully concealed till the conclusion. Nor is it loaded with those episodes and lengthened descriptions which encumber the *Clitophon* and *Leucippe* of Tatius. The author is also more careful than his predecessor not to violate probability, and seems anxious to preserve an appearance of historical fidelity.

A considerable part of the commencement of the *Chaereas and Callirhoe*<sup>1</sup> of Chariton

<sup>1</sup> Χαρίτωνος Αφροδισιεύου των περι Χαίρειαν και Καλλιρροην ερωτικων διηγηματων λογος. 3.—Appendix, No. 5.



has been lost, and the first incident we now meet with is the marriage of the hero and heroine. The other suitors of Callirhoe, enraged at the preference given to Chaereas, contrive to make him jealous of his wife. In a transport of passion he kicks her so violently that she swoons, and is believed dead. This incident is one of the worst imagined to be met with in any of the Greek romances. It leaves such an impression of the brutality of the principal character, that we are not reconciled to him by all his subsequent grief and diligent search after Callirhoe ;—our disgust might perhaps have been lessened, had the author made him employ a dagger or poison.

After her supposed death, Callirhoe is buried along with a great quantity of treasure. It was customary in Greece that effects of a value proportioned to the rank of the deceased should be deposited in tombs. It is mentioned in Strabo (l. 8,) that the persons who were sent by Cæsar to colonize Corinth, left no tomb unexplored ; οὐδὲνα τάφοι ἀσκησώμενον ;—an anecdote which evinces the existence of that species of depredation which forms a leading incident in this and so many of the other Greek romances. Callirhoe revives soon after her interment, and at this critical moment, Theron, a pirate, who had witnessed the concealment of the treasure, breaks open the sepulchre, which was placed near the shore, and sets sail with the booty and Callirhoe. At Miletus he sells her to Dionysius, an Ionian prince, who soon becomes enamoured of his slave. Chariton is the first writer of romance who has introduced an interesting male character. Dionysius is represented generous, learned, valiant, and tender ;—nor was there any thing improper in his attachment to Callirhoe, as she disclosed the nobleness of her birth, but concealed that she was the wife of another ;—he makes love to her with all possible delicacy, and imposes no restraint on her inclinations. Callirhoe, having already one husband, feels some scruples at accepting a second ; but at length agrees to espouse Dionysius, with the view of giving a nominal father to the child of which she was pregnant.

The following portion of the romance is occupied with the attempts of Mithridates,

satrap of Caria, to obtain possession of Callirhoe, for whom he had conceived a violent affection—the search made by Chaereas for his wife after discovering that she was innocent, and yet alive—and his arrival in Asia to reclaim her from Dionysius.

At length all parties are summoned to Babylon, to maintain their cause before Artaxerxes. Mithridates and Chaereas appear first, and afterwards Dionysius arrives, accompanied by Callirhoe. There is no part of the romance so unnatural as the account of the extraordinary effects produced by the beauty of Callirhoe, on the beholders at Babylon, and the regions through which she passed on her journey : but after her arrival, the flattery which we may suppose paid to a despot in an eastern court, by satraps and eunuchs, is finely touched ; and the meeting of Chaereas with Callirhoe in the palace, while the cause is under cognizance, is happily imagined. Artaxerxes, as was to be expected, having become enamoured of the object of dispute, defers giving any decision, in order to protract her stay in Babylon. Accounts, meanwhile, arrive of a revolt of the Egyptians, and their invasion of Syria. The king, accompanied by Dionysius, proceeds against them, and, according to the custom of the Persian monarchs, takes the ladies of the court, among whom Callirhoe was now numbered, along with him. But, as they are found to be cumbersome on the march, they are left at Arado, an island at a short distance from the continent. Chaereas, exasperated by a false report that the king had bestowed Callirhoe on Dionysius, joins the Egyptian forces, takes Tyre by stratagem, and, in consideration of his talents as a general, is appointed to command the fleet. Having destroyed the Persian navy soon after his elevation, in a great battle which was fought near Arado, he takes possession of the island, and recovers Callirhoe. In the course of the night succeeding the day which had been so propitious to the love and glory of Chaereas, a messenger arrives at Arado with accounts of the total overthrow of the Egyptian army, which had been chiefly effected by the skill and valour of Dionysius. To him Callirhoe writes a very handsome letter, and returns with Chaereas to Syracuse.



About the time of Chariton, there lived three persons of the name of Xenophon, each of whom wrote a romance. These authors were distinguished by the names of Antiochenus, Cyprius, and Ephesius. Antiochenus, in imitation of Jamblicus, called his romance *Babylonica*: the second Xenophon entitled his work (which relates the loves of Cinyras, Myrrha, and Adonis), *Cypriaca*.

The *Ephesiaca* (which has alone been published) consists of ten books, and comprehends the loves of Habrocomas and Anthia. In this work the incidents are extremely similar to those that occur in the preceding romances. The hero and heroine become enamoured in the temple of Diana: they are married early in the work, but in obedience to an oracle of Apollo, are forced by their parents to travel, and in the course of their wanderings experience the accustomed adventures with robbers and pirates. On one occasion Anthia, when separated from her husband by a series of misfortunes, falls into the hands of banditti, from whom she is rescued by a young nobleman, named Perilaus, who becomes enamoured of her. Anthia, fearing violence, affects a consent to marry him; but on the arrival of the appointed time, swallows a soporific draught which she had procured from a physician, who was the friend of Perilaus, and to whom she had entrusted the secret of her story. Much lamentation is made for her death, and she is conveyed with great pomp to a sepulchre. As she had only drunk a sleeping potion, she soon awakes in the tomb, which is plundered by pirates for the sake of the treasure it contained.

Mr Douce, in his *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, has pointed out the resemblance between this adventure and the leading incident of the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*. The *Ephesiaca*, he acknowledges, was not published at the time when Luigi da Porto wrote the novel, supposed to be Shakspeare's original, but he thinks it very probable he had met with the manuscript of the Greek romance.

Throughout the work the author of the *Ephesiaca* seems to think it necessary that every woman who sees Habrocomas, should fall in love with him, and that all the male characters should become enamoured of An-

thia. The story also is extremely complicated; and a remark which was formerly made respecting Heliodorus may be applied with double force to Xenophon; the changes of fortune in his romance are too numerous, and too much of the same nature. Xenophon, however, has received much commendation from the critics, for the elegance of his style, which is said to bear a strong resemblance to that of Longus, and is declared by Politian to be smooth as that of a more renowned Xenophon. "Sic utique Xenophon scribit, non quidem Atheniensis ille, sed alter eo *non insuavior* Ephesius."—(*Polit. Misc.* c. 15.)

After the age in which Chariton and the Xenophons are supposed to have lived, more than three centuries elapsed without the production of any fictitious narrative deserving attention. The first romance that appeared at the end of this long interval, was of a totally different nature from those which preceded it. The love it breathes is not of an earthly, but a heavenly nature; and its incidents consist not in the adventures of heroes, but the sufferings of martyrs.

In the times which succeeded the earliest ages of Christianity, the spirit of the new religion appears to have been but imperfectly understood by many of its most zealous ministers; and it is to the dispassionate investigation of modern times, that we are indebted for the restoration of its primitive simplicity and purity.

As the first corruption of the doctrines of Christianity was owing to the eastern gnostics, so, with the *Therapeutae*, and other oriental sects, originated the notion so fatal to the practice of genuine religion, that the rejection of the Creator's bounties in this world is the best title to an immeasurable beatitude in the next.

With a view of promoting a taste for monastic seclusion, St John of Damascus (a pious monk of Syria, who lived in the eighth century, during the reign of the emperor Leo Isauricus), appears to have written his *Lives of Barlaam and Josaphat*.<sup>1</sup> He feigns that the incidents had been told to him by certain pious Ethiopians, by which he means Indians, who had found them related by engravings on tablets of unsuspected veracity.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix, No. 6.



This story, which is supposed to be the model of our spiritual romances, is said, and with some probability, to be founded in truth; though the prophetic orthodoxy of Damascenus has anticipated discussions which were not agitated for centuries after the era of his saints.

To a carnal mind, the tale in itself is destitute of interest. Martyrs and magicians, theological arguments and triumphs over infidelity, alternately occupy the narrator, while Satan and his agents lie in wait for every opportunity to entrap the unwary Neophytes.

The style of the work is formed on the sacred writings, and it is not altogether without reason that the origin of spiritual romance has been traced to the apocryphal books of Scripture. The long discourses of Barlaam abound with parabolical allusions—in agreeable and ingenious similitudes. Indeed, in so long a composition, and of such a species, it is surprising that the author should have contrived so much to enliven the dialogue, and render it so little tedious.

When the Christian religion had spread abroad in Egypt, and the fame of the sanctity of its teachers reached even to India, where many, relinquishing their property, dedicated themselves to the solitary worship of God, there reigned in the east a certain king, named Abenner. This person was distinguished by the elegance of his form, and success in war, but darkened his other bright qualities by a superstitious regard to idols. All things prospered under his hands, and the want of children alone appears to have reminded him of the inadequacy of his power for securing happiness.

In the midst of this prosperity, Abenner was annoyed by the troops of monks and Christians, who, by their zeal in preaching, brought over from the worship of idols many of the most considerable nobles of the country. Enraged at this defection, and unacquainted with the truth of the doctrines disseminated, the king instituted a grievous persecution against all who professed the new religion. Many of the ordinary worshippers tottered in their faith; but the monastic class, by suffering martyrdom, enjoyed a glorious opportunity of showing their zeal. A distinguished satrap, moreover, unterrified by the sufferings

of the Christians, embraced the occasion for declaring his conversion, and in an elaborate speech endeavoured to seduce the king. His majesty, however, with a rare forbearance, dismissed him, without conferring the crown of martyrdom; but as a testimony of the inefficacy of his preaching, increased the rigour of his persecution, and bestowed new honours on the worshippers of idols.

After these aberrations a son is born to Abenner, of singular beauty; overjoyed by the accomplishment of his strongest wish, he proclaims a great festival, and assembles about fifty of the most eminent of the astrologers skilled in the learning of the Chaldeans. These sages predict that the young prince would surpass in wealth, power, and glory, all his predecessors. Daniel alone of their number foretells his distinguished zeal for the Christian religion, and declares that the glory to which he was destined was reserved for him in another and a better world.

The king, dismayed by this prophecy, be-thinks himself of human means to avert its completion. For this purpose he builds a splendid palace, in which he places his son, and where, by providing him with teachers and attendants of the most healthy and beautiful appearance, he is careful that no symptoms of death, or disease, or poverty, or any thing that could molest him, should fall under his observation.

After these arrangements, so well calculated for the good education of a young prince, finding that some of the monks still survived, Abenner renews the persecution, and on two of their number he bestows the crown of martyrdom, which indeed they appear to have eagerly solicited.

Meanwhile Prince Josaphat waxed strong, and possessing great ingenuity, and a prodigious love of learning, gives much disquietude to his teachers, whom he frequently puzzles by his questions.

Notwithstanding the anxiety of the king, to keep the mind of his son unacquainted with every idea productive of pain, the irksomeness of his confinement, and a desire to learn its cause, harass and distress him. Having, therefore, persuaded one of his attendants to inform him of the prediction of the astrologer, and the cause of the persecution of the Chris-



tians, he obtains permission from the king to leave his prison, his guard receiving instructions that wherever he went he should be surrounded with all imaginable delights : But in spite of the vigilance of those about him, to remove all unseemly objects from his sight, he one day steals a glance at a leper, and soon after has a full view of an old man in the last stage of decrepitude, by which means he gradually acquires the ideas of disease and of death.

In these days the word of God came to Barlaam, a pious monk, who dwelt in the wilderness of Sennaar, and moved him to attempt the conversion of Josaphat. Having, therefore girt himself with worldly vesture, he journeyed in disguise of a merchant, towards India, till he arrived at the residence of the young prince. Here he insinuated himself into the confidence of the attendant who had revealed to Josaphat the prediction of the astrologer. He informed this person that he wished to present the prince with a gem which was of great price, and was endowed with many virtues. Under this similitude of a worldly jewel, he typified the beauties of the gospel ; and the prince having heard the story of the merchant, ordered him to be instantly introduced. Barlaam having thus gained admittance, premises his instructions with a summary of sacred history, from the fall of Adam to the resurrection of our Saviour ; and, having in this way excited the attention and curiosity of Josaphat, who conjectures that this is the jewel of the merchant, he gradually proceeds to unfold all the mysteries and inculcate all the *credenda* of Christianity.

The sacrament of baptism, and the communion of bread and wine—faith—works—and the resurrection, with all the various topics such subjects involve, are successively expounded and illustrated. Josaphat yields implicit assent to the doctrines of Barlaam, and is admitted to the knowledge of all the questions which agitated the church in these early periods.

The consideration of the seclusion of the monks, and the efficacy of retirement in withdrawing their minds from this world, with a warm eulogy on this species of martyrdom, prepare the way for Barlaam to throw off the terrestrial habiliments of the merchant,

and to appear before his pupil in all the luxury of spiritual cleanness. An ancient goat-skin (from the effect of the sun, almost incorporated with his fleshless bones), served him as a shirt, a rough and ragged hair-cloth descended from his loins to his knees, and a cloak of the same texture suspended from the shoulders, composed the upper garment of this disciple of St Anthony.

Unappalled by the horror of this picture, Josaphat entreats the monk to release him from confinement, and to accept him as a companion in the desert ; but is dissuaded by the prudence of Barlaam, who fears that, by the failure of such a premature step, he might be debarred from the completion of his pious work.

Having, therefore, baptized Josaphat, and left him his leathern doublet and hair-cloth as memorials of his conversion, and to ward off the attacks of Satan, he departs to the deserts after a profusion of prayer for the prince's perseverance in well-doing.

During his absence, Josaphat continues to manifest his zeal by every kind of mortification and prayer. Unfortunately, however, Zardan, one of his attendants, who was apprized of his conversion, uneasy at the neglect of his trust, reveals to the king the visits of Barlaam.

Forthwith Abenner, being grievously enraged and troubled, betakes himself to Arachis, a celebrated astrologer, to whom he discovers the lamentable predicament of his son.

Arachis soon restores composure to the king, by proposing two expedients for the removal of this grievance. The first of these was to lay hold of Barlaam, and, by threatening the torture, to compel him to confess the falsehood of his doctrine. Should Barlaam escape, he next proposed to persuade Nachor, an ancient *mathematician*, who had a strong resemblance to the monk, to allow himself to be discomfited in a disputation on the truth of Christianity ; by which means he expects that Josaphat will without difficulty come over to the triumphant party.

In their endeavours to overtake Barlaam the Impious are unsuccessful ; but the king again suffers his wrath against the monks to overpower his humanity, and seventeen of



these ascetics, who refuse, with many contemptuous reproaches, to discover the retreat of Barlaam, are tortured and put to death.

Recourse was now had to the second expedient of Arachis, who, having arranged matters with Nachor, signifies that he had got hold of Barlaam; and the king having proclaimed an amnesty, invites the Christians, with the most learned of the heathen, to be present at a public disputation with the hermit, on the merits of the new faith.

The invitation to the Christians, however, appears not to have been accepted, for, with the exception of Barachias (who will appear in a still more dignified situation hereafter), no one comes forward in behalf of the pretended Barlaam. Spite of this untoward circumstance, the false Barlaam, like the celebrated Balaam of old, instead of cursing the king's enemies, blesses them altogether. The menaces of Josaphat, who, having discovered the imposition, threatened to tear out the heart and tongue of Nachor with his own hands, should he be overcome in the argument, appear to have operated on him as the flaming sword of the angel on the prudent and patient monitor of Balaam. However this may be, to the astonishment and displeasure of Abenner, Nachor, in his reply to the idolaters, proves the errors of their tenets, and the divine nature of Christianity.

Dividing the different religions into three classes, the worship of the gods, the Jewish faith, and the belief in Christ, he exposes the absurdity of the two first, and concludes his harangue by demonstrating the superiority of the New Religion. All this the Magi are unable to refute, and the king, after many vain attempts to remind Nachor of his instructions, is obliged to dissolve the assembly, with the intention of renewing the conference on the following day. Josaphat, however, in the course of the night completes the conversion of Nachor, who betakes himself in the morning to the wilderness, to work out his salvation in private.

When these things come to the knowledge of the king, he is, as usual, much irritated; and the prudent monks being no longer exposed to his resentment, his wise men and astrologers are flogged, and dismissed with disgrace. But, spite of these tokens of impar-

tiality, his time was not yet come, though he no longer offers sacrifice to the gods, nor holds their ministers in honour.

The servants of the idols perceiving the estrangement of the king, and fearing the loss of offerings he was wont to make to the gods, call to their aid Theudas, a celebrated magician, by whose instigation Abenner is again induced to interfere with the tranquillity of his son.

Presuming on the influence of the sexual passion, Abenner, by advice of Theudas, orders the attendants of the prince to be removed, and in their room damsels of most alluring beauty are placed around him. Josaphat appears to have borne their assaults with wonderful fortitude, though the proceedings of one of them were so violent, that the pious Damascenus ascribes them to the operation of demons, who were understood by the primitive Christians to be the authors and patrons of idolatry.

A more dangerous trial, however, is yet reserved for Josaphat. The most beautiful of his maiden attendants was a young princess, a captive of Abenner. In this damsel the prince takes a peculiar interest, and, reflecting on her misfortunes, he uses every endeavour to solace her by conversion to Christianity. Instigated by the demons, she promises to accede to this change of religion, on condition that the prince should espouse her; and on his declining a tie incompatible with his vow of celibacy, she labours to convince him of its innocence, supporting her arguments by the example of the patriarchs, and others distinguished by their piety. Josaphat, however, is determined against this formal breach of his engagements; and the princess is at length compelled to promise that she will embrace Christianity on more moderate terms. This was too much for the piety of Josaphat to resist, and the glory of redeeming the soul of the damsel, appeared to him to atone for the corporeal defilement, on which she insisted as a preliminary.

At this perilous crisis, and when the princess seems to have been on the brink of conversion, Josaphat bethinks himself of prayer. After some hours spent in tears and supplications, he falls into a profound sleep, during which it appeared to him that he was conveyed to



an immense meadow, adorned with beautiful and fragrant flowers, and with trees bearing every species of fruit, whose leaves, when shaken by the breeze, produced at once celestial melody and delicious odour. The eyes were refreshed by streams which glided along more pure than crystal, while couches, scattered through the meadow and luxuriously prepared, invited to repose. Thence he was carried into a city which shone with ineffable splendour. The walls were formed of burnished gold, and the bulwarks, which towered above them, were of precious stones, superior to those produced in the mines of this world. A supernatural light, diffused from above, illumined the streets. Ethereal bands, clothed in shining vestments, chaunted strains which had never yet reached the ear of mortal, and a voice was heard saying, "This is the rest of the just, this is the joy of those who have pleased the Lord." His guides refusing the request of Josaphat to remain in one of the corners of this city, he was again carried across the meadow, and on the opposite side he entered dark and gloomy caverns, through which whirlwinds blew with unceasing violence, and the worm and serpent rioted on the souls of sinners in a furnace blown to fury by the breath of demons.

Josaphat awakens greatly exhausted by this vision, and fortified in his virtuous resolutions by the very striking contrast which had been exhibited. At the same period likewise, the demons (as afterwards appeared from their own confession), had been put to flight by a sign of the cross which the prince had fortunately made, and thus left him to combat with his earthly antagonist alone.

The scheme of the idolaters having thus failed, and the captive princess being abandoned to virginity and reprobation, Theudas attempts in a conference to shake the faith of Josaphat; but the latter victoriously converts the magician, and sends him, like Nachor, to the desert, where he is baptized, and passes the remainder of his life in venting tears and groans, and in producing other fruits of repentance.

At length the king determines no longer to harass his son on the score of religion; but, by the advice of Arachis, divides his kingdom with him, hoping that the cares of govern-

ment may withdraw him from his ascetic habits. The first use, however, which Josaphat makes of his new-acquired power, is to erect the cross on every tower of the city where he dwells, while the temples and altars of the idols are levelled with the dust; he also dedicates to our Saviour a magnificent cathedral, where he preaches the gospel to his subjects, calls many from darkness to light, and distributes his treasures among the poor. Now God (says the pious author of this history), was with him whithersoever he walked, and all that he did prospered under his hands; but it was not so with the household of Abenner, which daily waxed weaker and weaker.

Presuming that this distinction would not have been made without a cause, the king finally allows himself to be converted by Josaphat; whose spiritual son he thus becomes, to the unutterable edification and comfort of the monks; and then retires from the government of his kingdom to a solitary place, where he chiefly employs himself in throwing dust on his head, and at length gives up the ghost after a long course of penitence and mortification.

Josaphat being now left without check, resolves to retire from the world, and pass the remainder of his days with Barlaam in the desert. Having therefore harangued his people, and compelled Barachias, the person who stood forward to defend the false Barlaam, to ascend the vacant throne, much against the inclination of the prince elect, he escapes with some difficulty from his subjects.

After a painful pilgrimage of many days, in the course of which he meets with numberless demons, tempting him sometimes in the form of springs of water, and sometimes in the less acceptable shape of wild beasts and serpents, he arrives at the cell of Barlaam.

There, after due preparation by devout exercises, the old man dies, and is buried by Josaphat, who spends thirty-five years in supplications to heaven, for a speedy removal from this life. The holy men of these times indeed appear to have passed their existence, as if they had been brought into this world only for the purpose of praying for their deliverance from its thralldom.

The prayers of Josaphat are at length heard,



and he is buried by a neighbouring hermit in the grave of Barlaam.

When the account of his demise reaches his successor, Barachias, he comes with a great retinue to the desert; and having raised the bodies of Josaphat and Barlaam, which he finds perfectly entire, and (which could not have been expected in the lifetime of the saints,) emitting a most grateful odour, he transports them to his metropolis. There they are deposited in a magnificent church, in which they continued to work miracles, as they had done in the course of their journey, and before they were again interred.

Such is the principal story of Josaphat and Barlaam, but the romance is interspersed with many beautiful parables and apologues, most of which bear evident marks of oriental origin. These are chiefly introduced as having been told by Barlaam to the young prince, in order to illustrate and embellish the sacred doctrines which he was inculcating.

A man flying from an unicorn, by which he was pursued, had nearly fallen into a deep pit, but saved himself by grasping the twigs of a slender shrub which grew on the side. While he hung suspended over the abyss by this feeble hold, he observed two mice, the one white and the other black, gnawing the root of the plant to which he had trusted. At the bottom of the gulf he saw a monstrous dragon, breathing forth flames, and prepared to devour him: while by this time the unicorn was looking at him over the verge of the precipice. In this situation he perceived honey distilling from the branches to which he clung, and, unmindful of the horrors by which he was surrounded, he satiated himself with the sweets which were dropping from the boughs.—Here the unicorn typifies death, by which all men are pursued; the pit is the world, full of evils; the shrub, of which the root was corroded by the white and black mouse, is life, diminished, and at length consumed, by the hours of day and night; the dragon is hell; and the honey, temporal pleasures, which we eagerly follow, regardless of the snares which are everywhere spread for our destruction.

In order to inculcate the wisdom of laying up treasures in heaven, we are told that a certain state observed the custom of choosing a

foreigner for its king, and after allowing him to pass a certain time in all imaginable delights, drove him, by a general insurrection, into a remote and desert island. One of these monarchs, learning how frail was the tenure by which he held the sovereignty, instead of consuming his time, like his predecessors, in feasts and carousals, employed himself in amassing heaps of gold and silver and precious stones, which he transmitted to the island to which he expected to be conveyed. Thither (when the period of banishment at length arrived), he betook himself without pain or reluctance, and while he saw his foolish predecessors perishing with want, he passed the remainder of his days in joy and abundance.

A powerful and magnificent king, during an excursion through the streets of his capital, observed a glimmering light, and looking through a chink of the door whence it issued, he perceived a subterraneous habitation, in which was seated a man clothed in rags, and apparently in the last extremity of want. By him sat his wife, holding an earthen cup in her hand, but singing and delighting her husband with all sorts of merriment. The king expressing his wonder at the thoughtlessness of those who could rejoice in such penury, his minister embraced the opportunity of teaching him that princes who exult in splendid palaces and royal vestments, appear still more thoughtless to the glorified inhabitants of the eternal mansions.

There is also related a story which has been frequently imitated, of a person who was prosecuted for a debt due to the crown, and who, on applying to friends whom he had supported, or for whom he had exposed his life, is repulsed by them all, but is at length relieved by an enemy, whom he had oppressed and persecuted.

It was probably in consequence of the number and beauty of these parables that Josaphat and Barlaam became so great a favourite, and was so frequently imitated during the middle ages. In a later period it gave rise to more than one of the tales of Boccaccio, as will appear when we come to treat of the Italian novelists; and it was unquestionably the model of that species of spiritual fiction, which was so prevalent in France during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



Josaphat and Barlaam, however, was the last example of this species of composition produced during the existence of the eastern empire; the only Greek romance by which it was succeeded, being formed on the model of Theagenes and Chariclea, or rather of the Clitophon and Leucippe. Indeed, in this last and feeble example of Grecian fiction, we seldom meet with an incident of which we have not the prototype in the romances of Heliodorus or Tatius. It is entitled *Ismene and Ismenias*,<sup>1</sup> and was written by Eustathius, sometimes called Eumathius, who flourished, as Huet terms it, in the twelfth century, during the reign of the emperor Emanuel Comnenus. The commencement of the story, and the mode in which the hero and heroine become acquainted, is evidently taken from Heliodorus. Ismenias is sent as a herald from his native city, Eurycomis, for the performance of some annual ceremony, to Aulycomis, where he is hospitably entertained by Sosthenes, the father of Ismene. This young lady is seized with a passion for the herald, on seeing him for the first time at dinner; she presses his hand, makes love to him under shelter of the table, and at length proceeds so far that Ismenias bursts into laughter. Heliodorus has painted his Arsace, and Tatius his Melite, as women of this description; but Eustathius is the first who has introduced his heroine avowing love without modesty and without delicacy. To her advances Ismenias at length makes some return, and the period of his embassy being expired, he departs to his native place, Eurycomis, accompanied by Sosthenes and his daughter Ismene, whom he entertains in his father's house. One day, at dinner, Sosthenes accidentally mentions that his daughter is speedily to be married. Ismene, who appears to have been previously unacquainted with this projected change in her situation, insists, in the course of the following night, on an immediate elopement with Ismenias. She dragged me along (says Ismenias, who relates the story), nor would she quit her hold, though I affirmed that the things necessary for her departure were not prepared. I with difficulty, at length, escaped from her hands, calling all the gods to wit-

ness.—Ismenias, however, on leaving her, does not go to prepare for the elopement, but to sleep; which, indeed, is the constant resource of the hero of this romance in every emergency. Throughout the whole work he consults his pillow, in circumstances which should have converted a sleeper of Ephesus into an Argus. At length, by the exertions of Cratisthenes, the friend of Ismenias, a vessel is procured, in which the lovers embark. A storm having arisen, and a victim being thought necessary by the sailors to appease Neptune, the lot falls on Ismene, who is accordingly thrown overboard. The wind of course is allayed; but as the lover of Ismene disturbs the crew with his lamentations, he is set ashore on the coast of Ethiopia. After being thus disembarked, he experiences the usual adventures with pirates, and is at last sold as a slave at Daphnopolis, to a Greek master, who soon after goes as herald to another city in Greece, and carries Ismenias along with him. The herald and his slave are received in the house of Sostratus, where Ismenias discovers Ismene, living in a servile condition. When thrown into the sea, she had been preserved by the exertions of a dolphin, and had afterwards been sold by pirates to Sostratus. This gentleman, with his daughter, and also Ismene, attend the master of Ismenias to Daphnopolis. In the middle of the night which followed their arrival in that city, the whole band proceed to worship in the temple of Apollo. Here the father and mother of Ismenias, and the parents of Ismene, are discovered tearing their hair, and lamenting in full chorus. The lovers are recognised by their parents, and redeemed from servitude, after the heroine has been subjected to the usual trial of chastity.

In this romance, which consists of eleven books, no distressing incident (except indeed to the reader) occurs till the sixth, in which Ismene's intended marriage is first alluded to by her father. The five preceding books present one continued scene of jollity, and the long descriptions of festivity are seldom interrupted, except by still longer accounts of dreams, which are represented as having been infinitely more agreeable than could be expected, from the loaded stomachs of the

<sup>1</sup> Ευσταθίου καὶ Ἰσμενίου καὶ Ἰσμενίου δράμα.



sleepers. As the work advances, these dreams become quite ridiculous, from their accurate minuteness, and the long reasonings carried on in them by persons whose stock of logic, even when awake, does not appear to have been very extensive.

The story of Ismene and Ismenias is not intricate in itself, but is perplexed by the similarity of names. The reader must be far advanced in the work before he learns to distinguish the hero from the heroine; especially as the latter acts a part which in most romances is assigned to the former. Eurycomis is the city from which Ismenias is sent as herald. In Aulycomis he is received by Sosthenes, the father of Ismene; and is sold to a Greek master at Daphnopolis, who goes as herald to Artycomis, where he is entertained by Sostratus. Eustathius has perhaps fallen into this blemish by imitating Heliodorus, in whose romance Chaereas, Calasiris, and Cnemon, are the names of the principal characters.

Eustathius resembles the author of Clitophon and Leucippe, in his fondness for descriptions of paintings. The second and fourth books are full of accounts of allegorical pictures in the temples and summer-house of the garden of Sosthenes, which were hung with representations of the four cardinal virtues, and also with emblems of each of the twelve months of the year. A reaper is drawn for July; a person bathing for August; and one sitting by the fire for February. Some of these allegories, however, are rather far-fetched; thus it is not very apposite to make a soldier the emblem of March, because that month is the most favourable for military expeditions. From Tatius also the author of Ismene and Ismenias borrows that ticklish experiment, which winds up the fable of so many of the Greek romances, with such honour to the heroines, and such satisfaction to their lovers. From Longus, according to Huet, he has taken that celebrated piece of gallantry,<sup>1</sup> which consists in

drinking from the part of a goblet which had been touched by the lips of a mistress. But this artifice, which has been introduced in so many amatory compositions,<sup>2</sup> may be traced much higher than the Daphnis and Chloe of Longus. It is one of the counsels given by Ovid in his Art of Love: (de Art. Amat. lib. i. 575.)

Fac primus rapias illius tacta labellis  
Pocula: quaque bibit parte puella, bibe.

Lucian, too, in one of his dialogues,<sup>3</sup> makes Jupiter pay this compliment to Ganymede: and the same conceit may be found in a collection of letters by the sophist Philostratus, who wrote in the second century. "Drink to me," says he, "with thine eyes only, or if thou wilt, putting the cup to thy lips, fill it with kisses, and so bestow it upon me."<sup>4</sup>

On account of his numerous plagiarisms, Eustathius is violently attacked by Huet, who says that he rather transcribes than imitates the work of Tatius. "Indeed," continues he, "there can be nothing more frigid than this romance, nothing meaner, nothing more unpleasant and disgusting. In the whole there is no decency, no probability, no invention, no happy disposition of incident. The author introduces the hero relating his own adventures: but one cannot discover whom he addresses, or why he is discoursing. Ismene is first enamoured, she first confesses and offers love without modesty, without shame, and without art. Ismenias takes no hint from these caresses, nor does he make any return. This may be praiseworthy in morals or philosophy, but is wretched in romance. In short, the whole is the work of some raw school-boy, or unskilful sophist, from whose hands the birch ought never to have been withdrawn."

These remarks of Huet may in general be well founded, but his censure of Eustathius for not having created a character to whom the hero recounts his history would be applicable, if just, not only to the work he criticises, but to many of our best modern novels

<sup>1</sup> Elegans urbanitatis genus.—Huet. Orig. Fab.

<sup>2</sup> Achilles Tatius, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Dialog. Deor. vol. i. p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> Εμοὶ δὲ μόνοις πρόπινε τοῖς ὀμμασιν. 'Εὖ δὲ βάλει τοῖς χεῖλεσσι προσφίξασα πλὴν φιλημάτων τὸ ἔκπωμα, καὶ ἔτασε δ.δ. 24. This idea, along with many other far-fetched

conceits of Philostratus, has been imitated by Ben Jonson, in his poem entitled the Forest:—

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,  
And I will pledge with mine;  
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,  
And I'll not look for wine."



and romances. The method adopted by Achilles Tatius, of introducing a listener, seems now exploded ; and if we fancy that the hero or heroine speaks, the narration must be regarded as a soliloquy from beginning to end. But in the modern novel, and in the Greek romance of Ismene and Ismenias, the persons who relate their story are neither conceived to address a friend, nor to report their adventures to themselves, but are supposed to have written what the reader peruses.

Notwithstanding its defects, Ismene and Ismenias has been imitated by subsequent poets and writers of romance. D'Urfé, in particular, has taken the description of the fountain of love introduced in the *Astrea*, from that of Diana at Artycomis ; and many of the incidents and names in the work of Eustathius have been transferred to the Spanish pastoral of Montemayor.

Besides those Greek romances that have been enumerated, there is one entitled *Dosicles and Rhodantes*, by Theodorus Prodromus, who wrote about the middle of the 12th century, and was nearly contemporary with Eustathius, but which shall not be farther mentioned : as, besides being very indifferently written, it is in iambics, and is rather a poem than a romance. It was followed by a great many others of a similar description, in the 12th and 13th centuries, all of which are written in iambics ; and contain a series of wandering adventures, strung together with little art or invention, as the loves of *Charicell and Drosilla*, by Nicetas Eugenianus, &c.

Of all these an account has been given by Fabricius, in his *Bibliotheca Græca* (l. 5. c. 6), but the only one deserving of notice or attention is the *History of Appollonius of Tyre*, which is written in such barbarous verse, that I can scarcely be considered as breaking through my plan, by giving a short account of it. The original Greek, I believe, has only been recently edited, but a Latin prose translation, formed as early as the 11th century, was published soon after the invention of printing, under the title of *Appollonii Tyrii Historia*. In this romance, we are told that Antiochus, king of Syria, who entertained towards his daughter warmer sentiments than those of paternal affection, in

order to retain her in his own palace, propounded to her numerous suitors a riddle to be explained as the price of her hand. Appollonius, king of Tyre, having fallen in love with the princess by report, arrives at the capital of Antiochus, and solves the enigma, which contained an allusion to the criminal passion of the father. The king of Syria lays snares for the destruction of Appollonius, who escapes from his dominions, and, after various adventures, is driven by a storm into the states of a monarch, where his regal descent being discovered by the majesty of his appearance, and the variety of his accomplishments, the king's daughter falls in love with him, and, in order to protract his stay, requests that he may be appointed her preceptor in those arts in which he had shown himself so skilful. In the course of his instructions, Appollonius forgets the princess of Syria, and lays claim to the hand of his fair pupil. Some months after the marriage had been solemnized, intelligence arrives that Antiochus and his daughter had been struck dead by lightning, and that the appearance of Appollonius in Syria would be the signal of a general declaration in his favour. With the view of obtaining this vacant sovereignty, he sets sail with his wife, who gives birth to a daughter during the voyage ; but while in a swoon, into which she had soon after fallen, she is believed dead, and from the superstition of the crew with regard to the malignant influence of corpses at sea, she is immediately thrown overboard in a chest. Appollonius lands in a state of despair on the coast of Syria, where he entrusts his infant daughter to persons on whose fidelity he could depend, and then sets out as a wanderer on the face of the earth. When his daughter grows up she is carried off by pirates, and sold at a Grecian city, where she is preserved from infamy by the compassion and continence of a young man, called Athenagoras, to whose embraces she was presented by her purchaser. She continues to earn a subsistence by her skill in music, till her father, who in the course of his wanderings had arrived at that city, in a mourning and dejected habit, attracted by the heavenly melody of her voice, enters her humble dwelling. For his solace and recreation, she sung with exquisite



pathos the unhappy story of her infancy, from which Appollonius discovered that she was indeed his daughter. He affianced her to Athenagoras, to whom she had been indebted for more than the preservation of life, and then, warned by a celestial vision, he departed for Ephesus. There he found his long-lost queen, who, having been wafted to that coast when thrown overboard, had been picked up by a physician, who at length succeeded in restoring the almost extinguished animation.

Besides the Latin prose version already mentioned, the romance, or history of Appollonius, was translated into Latin verse about the end of the 12th century, by Godfrey of Viterbo, who introduced it in his *Pantheon*, or *Universal Chronicle*, as part of the history of Antiochus the Third of Syria. It was also inserted in the *Gesta Romanorum*, which was written in the 14th century, and became soon after the subject of a French prose romance, which was the origin of the English *Chronicle of Apolyn of Tyre*, printed by Wynkin de Worde, in 1510. It was from the metrical version, however, of Godfrey de Viterbo, that the story came to Gower, who has told it with little variation in his *Confessio Amantis*. Gower is introduced as speaking the prologue to each of the five acts of *Pericles*, prince of Tyre; whence it may be presumed that the author of that play derived his plot from the English poet. The drama of *Pericles*, as is well known, has been the subject of much discussion; the composition of the whole, or greater part of it, having been attributed to Shakspeare, by some of his commentators, chiefly on the authority of Dryden:—

Your Ben and Fletcher in their first young flight,  
Did no Volpone, no Arbaces write;  
Shakspeare's own muse his *Pericles* first bore,  
The Prince of Tyre is elder than the Moor.

Besides the romances which have been enumerated, there appeared during the existence of the eastern empire, a number of Greek tales, chiefly derived from mythological stories, and resembling those of Parthenius Nicenus; but sometimes combined with long discussions on the nature of love. However, as these are not written according to the rules of romance, but are founded on heathen fables, they are not included in the plan that I have adopted.

A curious account is given by Huet, of a romance of disputed authenticity, which appeared under the name of Athenagoras, entitled, *Du Vrai et Parfait Amour*. A copy of this work, written in French, was sent, in the year 1569, to M. Lamané, by Martin Fumée, who professes himself to be merely the translator. He informs us in the preface that he received the Greek copy from this M. Lamané, who was prothonotary to the cardinal of Armagnac; that he had never seen any other manuscript of the work, and adds, that it is the production of that Athenagoras, who addressed an apology for the Christian religion to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, which would make him considerably prior to Heliodorus. In 1599, thirty years after it was written or translated by Fumée, the romance was published by Bernard of Sanjorry, with a preface, in which he says that he found among his papers a copy of the work, transcribed from the manuscript which Fumée had sent to M. de Lamané.

Huet speaks of this romance at considerable length, in the work I have so often quoted. He in the first place extols the splendid and interesting manner in which the romance opens. "There," says he, "as in a picture, is represented the lofty triumph of Paulus Emilius, where, amidst so many remarkable objects, the king of Macedon is exhibited, loaded with chains, and hurried along with his children before the chariot of his conqueror. There the enamoured Charis, grieving beyond measure that she had fallen into the power of the Romans, and that she had been torn from Theogenes, her lover, is touched with delight, on unexpectedly beholding him; and at the same moment is affected with the most poignant anguish, because she sees him among the captives." It is from the house of Octavius, a Roman general, into whose power she had fallen, that Charis views the triumph that excites such jarring emotions. Melangenia, who turns out to be an elderly gentlewoman of Carthage, but was at that time the slave of Octavius, is sent to console her. These two females recount to each other their early loves and misfortunes, the recital of which occupies the first six books of the romance, and the remaining four contain the adventures of Charis



after she had obtained her freedom from Octavius, which are in the usual style of those contained in the Greek romances.

As to the question of the authenticity of this production, the authors of the *Bibliothèque des Romans* seem to think it a genuine work, but do not enter into much discussion on the subject. Huet remarks, that the intimate knowledge shown by the author, of all those things which were discovered by the ancients, both in nature and art;—his wonderful acquaintance with the history of past times, and the ancient errors he adopts, into which a modern would scarcely have fallen; the Greek phraseology which shines even through the mist of translation; and, above all, the dignity and grace of antiquity, which cannot be easily imitated, and in which the whole work is clothed: all conspire to vindicate from the suspicion of forgery. The bishop then proceeds to unfold his arguments against the genuineness of the work, many of which are not more conclusive than those adduced in favour of its authenticity. The first reason for incredulity is, that the romance has not been mentioned in the dictionary of Photius; which, if admitted as a proof of fabrication, would render spurious the romances of Longus, Chariton, and the three Xenophons. Nor is the argument derived from the supposed imitation of Heliodorus altogether conclusive, since, upon the supposition that the work in question was a genuine production of Athenagoras, Theagenes and Chariclea may as probably have been derived from Charis and Theogenes, as these from the former appellations. The non-existence, however, of a Greek original of the romance *Du Vrai et Parfait Amour*, necessarily throws the *onus probandi* of its authenticity on its defenders; and, until produced, a strong presumption remains, that Charis and Theogenes is nothing more than a partial change of Theagenes and Chariclea.

The imposture, indeed, is clearly detected by the description of manners and institutions unknown in the age of Athenagoras. Thus the author conducts a criminal trial in the heart of Greece, according to the form of process before the parliament of Paris. The priests and virgins introduced in the romance,

as consecrated to Hammon, live according to the fashion of the monks and nuns of the fifteenth century, and not like those who existed in the early ages of Christianity.

Huet has mentioned, as the principal defect of the romance, that it is loaded with descriptions of buildings, and that the palaces are not raised by the magic hand of fiction, but by a professional architect. From this blemish Huet has drawn his chief argument against the authenticity of the work. "It is universally known," says he, "that the Cardinal Armagnac was much addicted to the study of architecture: Philander, the commentator on Vitruvius, was one of his devoted retainers, was the most scientific architect of his age, and was, besides, well informed in every branch of polite literature. Now, since the descriptions of this Athenagoras are closely squared to the principles of architecture inculcated by him in his annotations on Vitruvius, may it not reasonably be suspected, that Philander was the deviser of this literary imposture, in order to support his own opinions by the authority of antiquity? The fraud might have been detected, had the work issued from the hands of Philander, or the palace of the cardinal. That he might remove suspicion from himself, and conduct the reader as it were to other ground, he wrote an amatory romance. There, as if incidentally, he inserted the precepts of his art, and, concealing his own name, he ingeniously employed that of Lamané, for the possessor of the manuscript, and Fumée for the French translator. "However it may be," he continues, "the romance is ingeniously contrived, artfully conducted, enlightened with unparalleled sentiments and precepts of morality, and adorned with a profusion of delightful images, most skilfully disposed. The incidents are probable, the episodes are deduced from the main subject, the language is perspicuous, and modesty is scrupulously observed. Here there is nothing mean, nothing unnatural or affected, nothing that has the appearance of childishness or sophistry." Huet, however, complains that the conclusion of the fable of this romance is far removed from the excellence of the introduction.

I have now taken a successive view of the Greek romances, and have attempted to fur-



nish such an analysis of them as may enable the reader to form some notion of their nature and qualities.

One quality, it is obvious, pervades them all, and it is the characteristic not only of Greek romance, but of the first attempt at prose fiction in every country : The interest of each work almost wholly consists in a succession of strange, and often improbable adventures. Indeed, as the primary object of the narrator was to surprise by the incidents he rehearsed, the strangeness of these was the chief object to which he directed his attention. For the creation of these marvels sufficient scope was afforded him, because, as little intercourse took place in society, the limits of probability were not precisely ascertained. The seclusion, also, of females in these early times gave a certain uniformity to existence, and prevented the novelist from painting those minute and almost imperceptible traits of feeling and character, all those developments, which render a well-written modern novel so agreeable and interesting. Still, amid all their imperfections, the Greek romances are extremely pleasing, since they may be considered as almost the first produc-

tions in which woman is in any degree represented as assuming her proper station of the friend and the companion of man. Hitherto she had been considered almost in the light of a slave, ready to bestow her affections on whatever master might happen to obtain her ; but, in Heliodorus and his followers, we see her an affectionate guide and adviser—we behold an union of hearts painted as a main-spring of our conduct in life—we are delighted with pictures of fidelity, constancy, and chastity, and are encouraged to persevere in a life of virtue by the happy consequences to which it leads. The Greek romances are less valuable than they might have been, from giving too much to adventure, and too little to manners and character ;—but these have not been altogether neglected, and several pleasing pictures are delineated of ancient customs and feelings. In short, these early fictions are such as might have been expected at the first effort, and must be considered as not merely valuable in themselves, but as highly estimable in pointing out the method of awaking the most pleasing sympathies of our nature, and affecting most powerfully the fancy and the heart.

## CHAPTER II.

Introduction of the Milesian Tales into Italy.—Latin Romances.—Petronius Arbiter.—Apuleius, &c.

THE Milesian Fables had found their way into Italy even before they flourished in Greece. They had been received with eagerness, and imitated by the Sybarites, the most voluptuous nation in the west of Europe ; whose stories obtained the same celebrity in Rome, that the Milesian tales had acquired in Greece and Asia. It is not easy to specify the exact nature of the western imitations, but if we may judge from a solitary specimen transmitted by Ælian in his *Variæ Historiæ* (l. 14. c. 20), they were of a facetious description, and intended to promote merriment. A pedagogue of the Sybarite nation conducted his pupil through the streets of a town. The boy happened to get hold of a fig, which he

was proceeding to eat, when his tutor interrupted him by a long declamation against luxury, and then snatching the dainty from his hand, devoured it with the utmost greed. This tale Ælian says he had read in the Sybarite stories (σοφιστῶν συβαριτικῶν), and had been so much entertained that he got it by heart, and committed it to writing, as he did not grudge mankind a hearty laugh !

Many of the Romans, it would appear, were as easily amused as Ælian, since the Sybarite stories for a long while enjoyed great popularity ; and, at length, in the time of Sylla, the Milesian tales of Aristides were translated into Latin by Sisenna, who was prætor of Sicily, and author of a history of Rome. Plu-



tarch informs us in his life of Crassus, that when that general was defeated by the Parthians, the conquerors found copies of Milesian and Sybarite tales in the tents of the Roman soldiers; whence Surenas expressed his contempt for the effeminacy and licentiousness of his enemies, who, even in time of war, could not refrain from the perusal of such compositions.

The taste for the Sybarite and Milesian fables increased during the reign of the emperors. Many imitators of Aristides appeared, particularly Clodius Albinus, the competitor of the Emperor Severus, whose stories have not reached posterity, but are said to have obtained a celebrity to which their merit hardly entitled them.<sup>1</sup> It is strange that Severus, in a letter to the senate, in which he upbraids its members for the honours they had heaped on his rival, and the support they had given to his pretensions, should, amid accusations that concerned him more nearly, have expressed his chief mortification to arise from their having distinguished that person as learned, who had grown hoary in the study of old wives' tales, such as the Milesian-Punic fables.—Major fuit dolor, quod illum pro literato laudandum plerique duxistis, cum ille neniis quibusdam anilibus occupatus, inter Milesias Punicas Apuleii suit, et ludicra literatura consenesceret.

But the most celebrated fable of ancient Rome is the work of Petronius Arbiter, perhaps the most remarkable fiction which has dishonoured the literary history of any nation. It is the only fable of that period now extant, but is a strong proof of the monstrous corruption of the times in which such a production could be tolerated, though, no doubt, writings of bad moral tendency might be circulated before the invention of printing, without arguing the depravity they would have evinced, if presented to the world subsequent to that period.

The work of Petronius is in the form of a satire, and, according to some commentators, is directed against the vices of the court of Nero, who is thought to be delineated under the names of Trimalchio and Agamemnon;—

<sup>1</sup> Milesias nonnulli ejusdem esse dicunt, quarum fama non ignobilis habetur, quamvis mediocriter scriptæ sunt.—*Capitolinus vit. Clod. Albini.*

an opinion which has been justly ridiculed by Voltaire. The satire is written in a manner which was first introduced by Varro; verses are intermixed with prose, and jests with serious remark. It has much the air of a romance, both in the incidents and their disposition; but the story is too well known, and too scandalous, to be particularly detailed. The scene is laid in Magna Græcia: Encolpius is the chief character in the work, and the narrator of events;—he commences by a lamentation on the decline of eloquence, and while listening to the reply of Agamemnon, a professor of oratory, he loses his companion Ascyltos. Wandering through the town in search of him, he is finally conducted by an old woman to a retirement where the incidents that occur are analogous to the scene. The subsequent adventures—the feast of Trimalchio—the defection and return of Giton—the amour of Eumolpus in Bythia—the voyage in the vessel of Lycus—the passion and disappointment of Circe, follow each other without much art of arrangement; an apparent defect which may arise from the mutilated form in which the satire has descended to us.

The style of Petronius has been much applauded for its elegance—it certainly possesses considerable *naïveté* and grace, and is by much too fine a veil for so deformed a body. Some of the verses also are extremely beautiful. The best part of the prose, however, is the well-known episode of the matron of Ephesus, which, I have little doubt, was originally a Milesian or Sybarite fable. A lady of Ephesus, on the death of her husband, not contented with the usual demonstrations of grief, descended with the corpse into the vault in which it was entombed, resolving there to perish with sorrow. From this design no entreaties of her own or her husband's friends could dissuade her. But at length a common soldier, who had been appointed to watch the bodies of malefactors crucified in the vicinity, lest they should be taken down by their relations, perceiving a light, descended into the vault, where he gazed on the beauty of the mourner, whom he soon persuaded to eat, to drink, and to live. That very night, in her funeral garments, in the commencement of her grief, and in the tomb of her husband, she was united to this new and unknown lover.



When the soldier ascended from his bridal chamber, he found that the body of a criminal had been carried off. He returned to his mistress to deplore the punishment that awaited him for his neglect, but she immediately relieved his disquiet, by proposing that the corpse of the husband, whose funeral she had so vehemently mourned, should be raised, and nailed to the cross in room of the malefactor.

A story nearly the same with that in Petronius exists, under the title of the Widow who was Comforted, in the book known in this country by name of the Seven Wise Masters, which is one of the oldest collections of oriental stories. There, however, the levity of the widow is aggravated by the circumstance that the husband had died in consequence of alarm at a danger to which his wife had been exposed, and that she consented to mutilate his body, in order to give it a perfect resemblance to that of the malefactor which had been taken down from the cross.

This story of female levity has frequently been imitated, both in its classical and oriental circumstances. It is the *Fabliau De la femme qui se fist putain sur la fosse de son maria*. The *Pere du Halde*, in his *History of China*, informs us that it is a common story in that empire; but the most singular place for the introduction of such a tale was the *Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying*, by *Jeremy Taylor*, where it forms part of the 5th chapter, entitled, *Of the Contingencies of Death and Treating our Dead*.

The Latin writers of fiction seem to have been uniformly more happy in their episodes than in the principal subject. This remark is particularly applicable to the

#### ASS OF APULEIUS,

to which its readers, on account of its excellence, as is generally supposed, added the epithet of Golden. Warburton, however, conjectures, from the beginning of one of Pliny's epistles, that *Aureæ* was the common title given to the Milesian, and such tales as strollers used to tell for a piece of money to the rabble in a circle: "*Assem para et accipe auream fabulam.*" (L. ii. Ep. 20.) These Milesian fables were much in vogue in the

age of Apuleius. Accordingly, in the commencement of his work, he allures his readers with the promise of a fashionable composition,<sup>1</sup> though he early insinuates that he has deeper intentions than their amusement.

The fable is related in the person of the author, who commences his story with representing himself as a young man, sensible of the advantages of virtue, but immoderately addicted to pleasure, and curious of magic. He informs the reader, that on account of some domestic affairs, he was obliged to travel into Thessaly, the country whence his family had its origin. At his entrance into one of the towns, called Hypata, he inquired for a person of the name of Milo, and being directed to his house, rapped at the door. On what security do you intend to borrow, said a servant, cautiously unbolting it; we only lend on pledges of gold or silver. Being at last introduced to the master, Apuleius presented letters of recommendation from Demeas, a friend of the miser, and was in consequence asked to remain in the house. Milo having dismissed his wife, desired his guest to sit down on the couch in her place, apologising for the want of seats of a more portable description, on account of his fear of robbers. Apuleius having accepted the invitation to reside in the miser's house, went out to the public bath, and on the way reflecting on the parsimony of his host, he bought some fish for supper. On coming out from the market he met Pithias, who had been his school-fellow at Athens, but was at that time ædile of Hypata, and had the superintendence of provisions. This magistrate having examined the fish his friend had purchased, condemned them as bad, ordered them to be destroyed, and having merely reprimanded the vender, left his old companion dismayed at the loss of his supper and money, and by no means satisfied with the mode of administering justice in Thessaly.

After having visited the bath, Apuleius returned to sleep at Milo's, and rose next morning with the design of seeing whatever was curious in the city. Thessaly was the country whence magic derived its origin; and

<sup>1</sup> At ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram, auresque tuas benevolas lepido susurro permulceam.



of the nature of this art he had heard and even witnessed something on his journey from Rome. Hence he imagined that every thing he saw was changed from its natural form, by the force of enchantment; he expected to behold the statues walk, and to hear the oxen prophesy. While roaming through the town he met with a lady, called Byrrhena, who, having been a friend of his mother, invited him to lodge at her house. This he could not agree to, as he had already accepted an apartment at Milo's, but he consented to accompany her home to supper. The great hall in this lady's palace is splendidly described, and an animated account is given of a statue of Victory, and a piece of sculpture representing Diana, surrounded by her dogs. Apuleius is warned by Byrrhena to beware of Pamphile, the wife of Milo, who was the most dangerous magician in Thessaly. She informs him that this hag spares no charms to fascinate a young man for whom she conceives a passion, and does not scruple to metamorphose those who oppose her inclinations. Apuleius returned home, hesitating whether to attach himself to Pamphile, in order to be instructed in magic, or to her servant Fotis. The superior beauty of the latter speedily fixed his resolution, and he consoled himself for the many privations he endured in the house of Milo, by carrying on an intrigue with this damsel, who acted as the handmaid of Pamphile, and the valet of her parsimonious husband.

One night, while supping at the house of Byrrhena, Apuleius was informed that the following day being the festival of Momus, he ought to honour that divinity by some merry invention.

Returning home somewhat intoxicated, he perceived through the dusk three large figures attacking the door of Milo with much fury. Suspecting them to be robbers, who intended to break in, he ran his sword through them in succession, and, leaving them as dead, escaped into the house. Next morning he is arrested on account of the triple homicide, and is brought to a trial in a crowded and open court. The accuser is called by a herald. An old man, who acted in this capacity, pronounced a harangue, of which the duration was limited by a clepsydra, as the old sermons

were measured by hour glasses. Two women in deep mourning were introduced; one lamented the death of her husband, the other of her son, and both called loudly for vengeance on the murderer. Apuleius was found guilty of the death of three citizens; but previous to his execution it was resolved he should be put to the torture, to force a discovery of his accomplices, and the necessary preparations were accordingly completed. What had chiefly astonished Apuleius during this scene, was, that the whole court, and among others his host Milo, were all the while convulsed with laughter. One of the women in mourning now demanded that the dead bodies, which were in court, should be uncovered, in order that, the compassion of the judges being excited, the tortures might be increased. The demand was complied with, and the task assigned to Apuleius himself. The risibility of the audience is now accounted for, as he sees to his utter astonishment, three immense leather bottles, which, on the preceding night, he had mistaken for robbers. The imaginary criminal is then dismissed, after being informed that this mock trial was in honour of the god Momus.

On returning home the matter was more fully explained by Fotis, who informs Apuleius that she had been employed by her mistress to procure the hair of a young Bœotian, of whom she was enamoured, in order to prepare a charm which would bring him to her house: that having failed in obtaining this ingredient, and fearing the resentment of her mistress, she had brought her some goat's hair, which fell from the scissors of a bottle-shearer. These hairs being burned by the sorceress, with the usual incantations, had (instead of leading the Bœotian to her house) given animation to the skins to which they formerly adhered, and which being then in the form of bottles, appeared, in their desire of entrance, to assault the door of Milo. The above story of the bottles probably suggested to Cervantes the dreadful combat which took place at an inn between Don Quixote and the wine skins, which he hacked to pieces, supposing all the while that he was cleaving down giants, (book iv. c. 4).

Apuleius agreed to forgive Fotis the uneasiness she had occasioned, if she would promise



to exhibit her mistress to him while engaged in one of her magical operations. On the following night Fotis came to him in great agitation, and informed him that her mistress was about to assume the shape of a bird, to fly to some object of her affections. Looking through an opening in the door, he saw Pamphile take out several bottles, and rub herself with an ointment contained in one of them. Then having muttered certain words, her body is covered with feathers, her nails are lengthened into claws; and forthwith, in shape of an owl, she flies out of the chamber. Apuleius next requested Fotis that she would favour him with some of the ointment, that he might follow her mistress in the same form, to his restoration from which he understood nothing farther was necessary than a draught of spring water, mixed with anise and laurel leaves. Fotis, however, gave him a different ointment from that which she had intended, so that, instead of being changed into a bird, he assumed the figure of an Ass. In this shape he retains his former feelings and understanding, but is told by Fotis that he cannot be restored to the human form but by eating rose leaves.

The remainder of the story is occupied with the search of Apuleius after this valuable article, and the hardships he suffers under the degraded form to which he was reduced; a part of the work which seems, in its literal signification, to have suggested the idea of such compositions as the *Adventures of a Lap-dog*, the *Perambulations of a Mouse*, &c.

Apuleius in the first place descended to the stable, where he was very roughly treated by his own horse, and the ass of Milo. In a corner of his new habitation he perceived the shrine of Hippona, the goddess of stables, adorned with fresh-gathered roses: but in attempting to pluck them he was beat back with many blows by his own groom, who felt indignant at the meditated sacrilege.

At this instant Milo's dwelling was broken into by robbers, who, having pillaged the house, loaded the horse and the two asses which they found in the stable with the booty. Apuleius observed several rose bushes in a garden through which he passed on his way to the habitation of the banditti; but restrained himself from partaking of their

flowers, lest he should be murdered by his new masters on resuming the human figure. After a long journey, and when almost ready to sink under the weight of his burden, he arrived at the abode of the robbers. This residence is described in a manner extremely similar to the habitations of banditti, in all modern romances. We have the rugged mountain, impenetrable forest, inaccessible rocks, and even the solid and lofty tower, with the subterraneous cavern. In this frightful abode supper was served up by an old woman, who was the only domestic; and during the repast another troop arrived bearing a rich booty.

At day-break the band set out on a new expedition, and returned a few hours afterwards with a young lady as their prize, whom they consigned to the care of the old woman. She informed this hag that she had been carried off on the day of her nuptials with a young man, to whom she was much attached. The old woman, to alleviate her distress, entertained her with a story which she said was taken from the Milesian fables, and which is the celebrated tale of Cupid and Psyche.

Apuleius was employed in different expeditions with the robbers; he also made several attempts to escape from their power, which proved abortive. At length one of their number, who had been left in the town where Milo resided, returned to his band, and informed them that they were not suspected of the robbery, which had been laid to the charge of a person of the name of Apuleius, who had forged letters from a friend of Milo, and had disappeared after pillaging the house. He also introduced a stranger, who represented himself as the celebrated robber Hemus, the terror of all Thessaly; and who, of consequence, was gladly chosen the leader of the banditti. Apuleius, by attending to the conversation which passed between this person and the young lady, discovered that the pretended outlaw was her husband, who had assumed a false character, in order to effect her escape. This he accomplished one evening by intoxicating his companions, when, having bound them with cords, and placed his bride on the back of Apuleius, he returned with her to the town in which she had formerly resided.



There is a striking coincidence of the occurrences at the habitation of the robbers with some of the early incidents in *Gil Blas*. The gloomy habitation of the robbers—the manner in which it is secured—the revelry of the banditti—the old woman by whom they are attended—the arrival of a new troop during the entertainment—the captivity of the young lady and final escape, are, I think, resemblances too strong to have been merely accidental.

The new master of Apuleius, in gratitude for the service he had rendered, determined he should be sent to his mares in the country, to aid in the propagation of mules. Unfortunately the groom he was entrusted to had a wife, who totally marred the amorous expectations of Apuleius, by setting him to turn a mill. Nor was his situation improved when the groom, at length recollecting his orders, sent him on the service to which he was originally destined; as he met with a most inhospitable reception from some horses who were his fellow suitors.

After this mortification, Apuleius was employed to bring burdens of wood from the mountains, under the guidance of a boy, who treated him with the utmost cruelty, and spread such a report of his mischievous disposition, that he was at the point of being forever disqualified for the multiplication of mules. Intelligence, however, opportunely arrived that his master had been treacherously murdered by a former lover of his wife's, and that this lady, after taking a savage revenge on her perfidious admirer, had laid violent hands on herself. On receiving this intelligence, the groom pillaged his master's house in the country, loaded Apuleius with the booty, and fled with the rustics who were his accomplices. In the course of their journey through a wild and desolate country, they met with various adventures; and at length arrived in a populous town, where the groom resolved to fix his residence. Here Apuleius was purchased by an old eunuch, one of the priests of the Syrian goddess. While in his possession he was witness to the dreadful debaucheries of the ministers of that divinity; and inadvertently braying with astonishment at their excesses, one of the neighbours, who had lost

an ass, burst into the house, which rendered public the infamy of these wretches.

In consequence of this exposure, the eunuchs were obliged to remove to another town, whither Apuleius, bearing the statue of the Syrian goddess, accompanied them. Here they lodged in the house of one of the inhabitants, who had a great veneration for that deity. A dog unfortunately ran off with a haunch of venison, with which he had intended to entertain her votaries. The cook proposed to hang himself in despair, but his wife persuaded him to leave that operation as his last resource; and meanwhile to substitute an ass's leg in room of the one he had lost. Apuleius having understood that he was the intended victim, rushed into the hall where the host was entertaining the priest, and upset the tables. A report having been circulated that a mad dog had been seen in the stable, this act of Apuleius was ascribed to hydrophobia; and he would have been sacrificed to this suspicion, if he had not instantly drunk some water from a vase.

The eunuchs soon after removed, and in travelling about with them, Apuleius heard the recital of the tale concerning the tub, which forms the second story of the seventh day of the *Decameron*. Apuleius at length was sold at the market of one of the towns through which he passed, to a baker, who meets with the adventure related by Boccaccio in the tenth novel of the fifth day. He next fell into the possession of a gardener, from whom he was forcibly carried off by a Roman soldier, and sold to two brothers who lived together; the one being the cook, and the other the pastry-cook, of a man of wealth and importance. When they went out they made it a rule to lock the door of the tent in which they baked and dressed victuals, and left only their ass in it. At their return they invariably found that the pastry and other provisions had disappeared. As the ass always left his corn and hay unconsumed, he became an object of suspicion: and being watched one day by the brothers, was detected at his dainty repast. The cooks were much entertained with the spectacle, and the account of this piece of epicurism having reached the ears of their master, Thyasus, Apuleius was purchased by him, and taught



a variety of tricks by one of his freedmen. The possession of this singular animal threw much lustre on the proprietor, in the estimation of his fellow-citizens, and he was in consequence appointed chief magistrate of Corinth for five consecutive years.

Apuleius was also of great value to the freedman who had charge of him, as he was exhibited for money to the inhabitants. He received besides frequent visits from ladies, which, at their solicitation, he was privately sent to return.<sup>1</sup>

A splendid fête was now given by his master, in honour of his election to the magistracy. The judgment of Paris was represented, and Apuleius was destined to act a principal part in a species of afterpiece, which was by no means consonant to his feelings as a public exhibition.

He fled, unperceived, to the fields, and having galloped for three leagues, he came to a retired spot on the shore of the sea. The moon, which was in full splendour, and the awful silence of the night, inspired him with sentiments of devotion. He purified himself in the manner prescribed by Pythagoras, and addressed a long prayer to the great goddess Isis. In the course of the night she appeared to him in a dream; and, after giving a strange account of herself, announced to him the end of his misfortunes; but demanded, in return, the consecration of his whole life to her service. When he awakens from this dream, he feels confirmed in the resolution of aspiring to a life of virtue. On this change of disposition, and conquest over his passions, the author finely represents all Nature as assuming a new face of cheerfulness and gaiety. "Tanta hilaritudine, præter peculiarem meam, gestire mihi cuncta videbantur, ut pecua etiam cujuscemodi, et totas domos, et ipsam diem serena facie gaudere sentirem."

While in this frame of mind, Apuleius perceived an innumerable multitude advancing towards the shore, to celebrate the festival of Isis. Amid the crowd of priests he remarked the sovereign pontiff, with a crown of roses on his head; and approached to pluck them.

The pontiff, yielding to a secret inspiration, held forth the garland. Apuleius resumed his former figure, and the promise of the goddess was fulfilled. He was then initiated into her rites—returned to Rome, and devoted himself to her service. This information, he remarks, will not surprise those who know that he is decurion of the temple of Osiris, and who are not ignorant that Isis and Osiris are one divinity.

Apuleius was finally invited to a more mystic and solemn initiation, by the goddess herself, who rewarded him for his accumulated piety, by an abundance of temporal blessings.

Such is the general outline of the subject of the Golden Ass, which the contemporaries of the author, and critics of the succeeding age, regarded as a trivial fable, written with the sole intention of amusing the vulgar: "Quibus fabulis," says Macrobius, "Apuleium nonnunquam lusisse miramur." At an early, though subsequent period, a very different opinion was adopted. It was no longer questioned that Apuleius had some profound intention; but it was not agreed in what his aim consisted. St Augustine permitted himself to doubt whether the account given by Apuleius of his change into an ass, was not a true relation. "Aut indicavit," says he, "aut finxit." The popular sentiment was, that the work was chiefly intended as a satire on the vices of the author's countrymen; and that, in imitation of a great predecessor, he had been too anxious to particularize the maladies which he wished to remedy. Beroaldus, the learned commentator on Apuleius, imagines the transformation into an ass, to signify that man becomes brutified when immersed in sensual pleasures; but that when roses are tasted, by which science and wisdom are typified, he returns to religion and virtue;—a change which is allegorically painted by a restoration to the human form.

In the Divine Legation of Moses, Dr Warburton has entered into much learned and ingenious, though often far-fetched speculation, on this subject. He introduces this topic

<sup>1</sup> See *La Pucelle*, chant. xx. note 4. "L'âne d'Apulée (says Voltaire) ne parla point; il ne put jamais prononcer que *Oh* et *non*: mais il eut une

bonne fortune avec une dame, comme on peut le voir dans l'Apuleius en deux volumes in 4° *cum notis ad usum Delphini*."



(which, at first sight, seems to bear a very remote analogy to the mission of the Jewish legislator), while attempting to demonstrate that all nations have inculcated the general doctrine of a Providence, and the belief in a future state of rewards and punishments, by some circumstantial and popular method, as the Institution of Mysteries. The learned prelate contends that the author had conceived an inveterate dislike to the Christian religion. He proves, from several passages in the *Apology*, another work of Apuleius, that his brother-in-law, by whom he was prosecuted on a charge of magic, was of this persuasion; and in the *Golden Ass*, the vices of the baker's wife are summed up, by informing us that she was a Christian;—hence his prepossession in favour of the pagan worship was increased, and he was induced to compose a work for the express purpose of extolling this superstition and recommending an initiation into its mysteries, as a remedy for all vices whatever. On this system, the author of the *Divine Legation* proceeds to explain the prominent incidents of the romance. The ancients believed that a deliverance from a living death of brutality and vice, and a return to a new existence of virtue and happiness, which form the principal subject of the *Golden Ass*, might be effected by initiation into the mysteries. Byrrhena is the representation of virtue; Apuleius refuses her invitation, and gives way to his passion for pleasure and magic, till the crimes and follies into which they lead him, end in his transformation to a brute; in which shape every change of condition makes his situation more wretched and contemptible. The description of the enormities committed by the priests of Cybele is intended as a contrast to the purer rites of Isis. Roses, by which the restoration to the human form is effected, were, among the ancients, symbols of silence; a requisite quality of the initiated, particularly among the Egyptians, who worshipped Harpocrates, the first-born of Isis:—hence the statues of Isis were crowned with chaplets of these flowers, and hence the phrase, “under the rose,” has become in modern times proverbial. The solemn initiation, which is fully described, and the account of which concludes the work, agrees with what other writers have delivered concerning the mysteries.

If the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius was written, as Warburton believes, in support of the pagan worship; it is, perhaps, strange, that its author should have chosen, as a prototype, the *Ass* of Lucian; which, like many other works of that satirist, was intended to ridicule the heathen mythology. Both compositions derived their origin from the writings of Lucius Patrensis, which are not now extant; but are supposed to have been an account of metamorphoses according to the popular theology. One of these transformations was, for the sake of ridicule, adopted by Lucian in his *Ass*: which, though the leading incidents are the same, is a mere sketch or outline of the *Golden Ass* of the Roman. Thus Apuleius has added the story of the assassination of the bottles, and the mock trial which ensued. He has also given a serious and sacred air to the restoration to the human form, which Lucian accidentally effects by plucking some roses from a by-stander, when condemned to an exhibition similar to that from which Apuleius escaped. The long description of the initiation into the mysteries, is substituted for the ludicrous incident which terminates the adventures of Lucian; who, having, in his original shape, sought refuge with a lady in whose sight he often found favour as an ass, was turned out with disgrace on account of the diminution of his charms.

The *Golden Ass* is also enriched with numerous episodes, which are the invention of Apuleius, or at least are not to be found in the work of Lucian. Of these, the best known, and by far the most beautiful, is the story of *Cupid and Psyche*, which is related by the female servant of the banditti to the young lady whom they had taken captive.

A certain king had three daughters, of whom the youngest and most lovely was named Psyche. Her charms indeed were so wonderful, that her father's subjects began to adore and pay her the homage which should have been reserved for Venus. The exasperated goddess commands her son to avenge her on this rival, by inspiring Psyche with a passion for some unworthy object; but while employed in this design, Cupid himself becomes enamoured of the princess. Meanwhile, in obedience to the response of an oracle, Psyche is exposed on a barren rock,



where she is destined to become the prey of a monster. From this hapless situation she is borne by the commissioned Zephyr, who wafts her to a green and delightful valley. Here she enjoys a refreshing sleep; and on awakening perceives a grove, in the centre of which was a fountain, and near the fountain a splendid palace. The roof of this structure was supported by golden pillars, the walls were covered with silver, and every species of animal was represented in exquisite statuary at the portal: Psyche enters this edifice, where a splendid feast is prepared; she hears a voice inviting her to partake of this repast, but no one appears. After this sumptuous banquet is removed, she listens to a delightful concert which proceeds from unseen musicians. In this enchanting residence she is espoused and visited every night by Cupid. Her husband, who was ever invisible, forbids her to attempt to see him; adding, that her happiness depended on obedience to the prohibition. In these circumstances Cupid, at her earnest solicitation, reluctantly agrees to bring her sisters to the palace. These relatives, being envious of the happiness of their younger sister, try to persuade her that her husband is a serpent, by whom she would be ultimately devoured. Psyche, though by this time she should have been sufficiently qualified to judge how far this suspicion was well founded, resolves to satisfy herself of the truth by ocular demonstration. Bearing a lamp in one hand, and a dagger in the other to destroy him should he prove a monster, she approaches the couch of her husband while he is asleep. In the agitation produced by the view of his angelic form, she allows a drop of scalding oil to fall on his shoulder. The irritated god flies from her presence, and leaves her a prey to remorse and despair. The enchanted garden and the gorgeous palace vanish along with him. Psyche finds herself alone and solitary on the banks of a river. Under the protection of Pan she wanders through the country, and successively arrives at the kingdoms of her sisters, by each of whom she is repulsed. The victim equally of the rage of Venus and of her son, she roams through all regions of the earth in search of the celestial lover whose favour she had forfeited. She is also subjected to various

trials by Venus, one of which is to bring water from a fountain guarded by ever-watchful dragons. Jupiter, at length, takes pity on her misfortunes, endows her with immortality, and confirms her union with her forgiving husband. On this occasion the Hours empurple the sky with roses; the Graces shed aromatic odours through the celestial halls; Apollo accompanies the lyre with his voice; the god of Arcadia touches his sylvan reeds; and the Muses join in the chorus.

This allegory is supposed by some writers to be founded on an obscure tradition of the fall of man, and to form an emblem of his temptation, transgression, repentance, and subsequent reception into the favour of the godhead. Its meaning, however, is probably more restricted, and only comprehends the progress of the soul to perfection, the possession of divine love, and reward of immortality. From the earliest times the influence of religious sentiments has been typified by the hopes and fears of an amatory attachment. This style of composition was adopted by the rhapsodists of Hindostan and Persia, and bewitched the luxuriant imagination of the wisest of mankind. Bryant, in his *Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (vol. ii. 388), informs us that one of the emblems among the Egyptians was Psyche ( $\Psi\chi\chi\epsilon$ ), who though represented as a beautiful female, was originally no other than the Aurelia, or butterfly, an insect which remains in a state of torpor during winter, but at the return of spring comes forth with new life, and in beautiful attire. This was deemed a picture of the soul of man, and of the immortality to which he aspired; and more particularly of Osiris, who, after being confined in a coffin, enjoyed a renewal of life. This second birth is described under the character of Psyche, and, as it was the fruit of divine love, of which Eros was the emblem, we find him often introduced as a concomitant of Psyche.

Whatever may be the concealed meaning of the allegory, the story of Cupid and Psyche is certainly a beautiful fiction. Of this, the number of translations and imitations may be considered as a proof. Mr Rose, in the notes to his version of *Partenopex de Blois*, has pointed out its striking resemblance



to that romance, as also to the Three Calenders, and to one of the Persian Tales. The prohibition of Cupid, and the transgression of Psyche, has suggested the Serpentin Vert of Mad. d'Aulnoy ; indeed, the labours to which Psyche is subjected seem to be the origin of all fairy trials, particularly *Gracieuse et Percinet*. The whole story has also been beautifully versified by Marino in his poem L'Adone. Cupid is introduced in the fourth book relating it for the amusement of Adonis, and he tells it in such a manner as to form the most pleasing episode of that delightful poem. I need not mention the well-known imitation by Fontaine, nor the drama of Psyche, which was performed with the utmost magnificence at Paris in 1670, and is usually published in the works of Moliere, but was in fact the effort of the united genius of that author, Corneille, Quinault, and Lulli.

Nor have the fine arts less contributed to the embellishment of this fable : the marriage of Cupid and Psyche has furnished Raphael with a series of paintings, which are among the finest of his works, and which adorn the walls of the Farnese Palace in the vicinity of Rome. In one compartment he has repre-

sented the council of the gods deliberating on the nuptials—in another the festival of the reconciliation. The frieze and casements are painted with the sufferings of Psyche, and the triumphs of Cupid over each individual god.

The monuments, too, of ancient sculpture represented Cupid and Psyche in the various circumstances of their adventures. It is from an ancient intaglio, a fine onyx in possession of the Duke of Marlborough, and from another, of which there is a print in Spence's Polymetis, that Darwin has drawn his beautiful picture in the fourth canto of the Botanic Garden :—

So pure, so soft, with sweet attraction shone  
Fair Psyche kneeling at the ethereal throne,  
Won with coy smile the admiring court of Jove,  
And warmed the bosom of unconquered Love.  
Beneath a moving shade of fruits and flowers,  
Onward they march to Hymen's sacred bowers ;  
With lifted torch he lights the festive train  
Sublime, and leads them in his golden chain ;  
Joins the fond pair, indulgent to their vows,  
And hides with mystic veil their blushing brows.  
Round their fair forms their mingling arms they  
fling,  
Meet with warm lip, and clasp with rustling wing.

### CHAPTER III.

Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe—Romances of Chivalry relating to the early and fabulous History of Britain, particularly to Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table—Merlin—Sangreal—Perceval—Lancelot du Lac—Meliadus—Tristan—Isaie le Triste—Artus—Gyron—Perceforest—Artus de la Bretagne—Cleriadus.

FABULOUS narrative, we have seen in a former part of this work, like almost every one of the arts of man, originated in the desire of perfecting and improving nature, of rendering the great more vast, the rich more splendid, and the gay more beautiful. It removed, as it were, from the hands of fortune the destinies of mankind, rewarded virtue and valour with success, and covered treachery and baseness with opprobrium.

It was soon perceived that men sympathize not with armies or nations, but with individuals ; and the poet who sung the fall of empires was forced to place a few in a pro-

minent light, with whose success or misfortunes his hearers might be affected, while they were altogether indifferent to the rout or dissection of the crowds by which they were followed. At length, it was thought, that narratives might be composed where the interest should only be demanded for one or two individuals, whose adventures, happiness, or misery, might of themselves afford delight. The experiment was attended with success ; and as men sympathize most readily with events which may occur to themselves, or the situations in which they have been, or may be, the incidents of fiction derived their character from the



manners of the age. In a gay and luxurious country stories of love become acceptable. Hence the Grecian novels were composed, and as, in relating the adventures of the lovers, it was natural to depict what might really have taken place, the general features of the times, the inroads of pirates, religious ceremonies, &c. were chiefly delineated. The ascetic habits of the monks in like manner gave rise to spiritual romance, and the notion of tranquillity in the fields of Greece may have suggested the beautiful rural images portrayed in the pastoral of Longus.

Now, when, by some great convulsion, a vast change is effected in manners, the incidents of fiction will necessarily be changed also; first, because the former occurrences became less natural, and, secondly, give less delight. From the very nature, then, of domestic fiction, it must vary with the forms and habits and customs of society, which it must picture as they occur successively,

“And catch the manners living as they rise.”

Never, in the annals of the human race, did a greater change of manners take place than in the middle ages; and accordingly, we must be prepared to expect a prodigious alteration in the character of fictitious literature, which, we have seen, may be expected to vary with the manners it would describe. But not only was there a change in the nature of the characters themselves, and the adventures which occurred to them, but a very peculiar style of embellishment was adopted, which, as it does not seem to have any necessary connection with the characters or adventures it was employed to adorn, has given the historians of literature no little labour to explain. The species of machinery, such as giants, dragons, and enchanted castles, which forms the seasoning of the adventures of chivalry, has been distinguished by the name of *Romantic Fiction*; and we shall now proceed to discuss the various systems which have been formed to account for its origin.

Different theories have been suggested for the purpose of explaining the origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe. The subject is curious, but is involved in much darkness and uncertainty.

To the northern Scalds, to the Arabians, to the people of Armorica or Britany, and to the classical tales of antiquity, has been successively ascribed the origin of those extraordinary fables, which have been “so wildly disfigured in the romances of chivalry, and so elegantly adorned by the Italian Muse.”

In the investigation of this subject, a considerable confusion seems to have arisen, from the supporters of the respective systems having blended those elements of romance which ought to be referred to separate origins. They have mixed together, or at least they have made no proper distinction between three things, which seem, in their elementary principles at least, to be totally unconnected. 1. The arbitrary fictions of romance, by which I mean the embellishments of dragons, enchanters, &c. 2. That spirit of enterprise and adventure which pervaded all the tales of chivalry. 3. The historical materials, if they deserve that name, relating to Arthur and Charlemagne, which form the ground-work of so large a proportion of this class of compositions.

In treating this subject it will therefore be proper to consider, 1. The origin of those wild and improbable fictions, those supernatural ornaments, which form the machinery of Romance, and which alone should be termed Romantic Fiction. 2. The rise of that spirit of chivalry which gave birth to the eagerness for single combat, the fondness for roaming in search of adventures, and the obligation of protecting and avenging the fair; and, lastly, we shall consider how these fabulous embellishments, and this spirit of adventure, were appropriated to the story of individual knights, and treat of those materials concerning Arthur and the Round Table, and the Peers of Charlemagne, whose exploits, real or fictitious, have formed the subject of romance.

I. One theory (which, I believe, was first adopted by M. Mallet<sup>1</sup>) is, that what are termed the arbitrary fictions of romance, have been exclusively derived from the northern Scalds. This system has been strenuously maintained by subsequent writers, and particularly by Dr Percy,<sup>2</sup> who observes, that the Scalds originally performed the functions of historians, by recording the victories and genealogies of their princes in a kind of nar-

<sup>1</sup> Introduction a l'Histoire de Dannemarc.

<sup>2</sup> Reliques of Ant. Eng. Poetry, vol. iii.



rative song. When history, by being committed to prose, assumed a more stable and more simple form, and was taken out of their hands, it became their business chiefly to entertain and delight. Hence they embellished their recitals with marvellous fictions, calculated to allure the gross and ignorant minds of their audience. Long before the time of the crusades, they believed in the existence of giants and dwarfs, in spells and enchantments. These became the ornaments of their works of imagination, and they also invented combats with dragons and monsters, and related stories of the adventures of knights with giants and sorcerers.

Besides this assumption, Dr Percy also maintains, that the spirit of chivalry, the eagerness after adventure, and the extravagant courtesy, which are its chief characteristics, existed among the northern nations long before the introduction of the feudal system, or the establishment of knighthood as a regular order.

These fictions and ideas, he asserts, were introduced into Normandy by the Scalds, who probably attended the army of Rollo in its migration to that province from the north. The skill of these bards was transmitted to their successors the minstrels, who adopted the religion and opinions of the new countries. In place of their pagan ancestors they substituted the heroes of Christendom, whose feats they embellished with the Scaldic fictions of giants and enchanters. Such stories were speedily propagated through France, and by an easy transition passed into England after the Norman Conquest.

A second hypothesis, which was first suggested by Salmasius, and which has been followed out by Mr T. Warton,<sup>1</sup> ascribes to the Saracens the foundation of romantic fiction. It had at one time been a received opinion in Europe, that the wonders of Arabian imagination were first communicated to the western world by means of the crusades; but Mr Warton, while he argues that these expeditions tended greatly to propagate this mode of fabling, contends that these fictions were introduced at a much earlier period by the Arabians, who, in the beginning

of the eighth century, settled in Spain. Through that country they disseminated those extravagant inventions peculiar to their fertile genius. Those creations of fancy, the natural offspring of a warm and luxuriant climate, were eagerly received, and colder imaginations were kindled by the presence of these enlivening visitors. The ideal tales of the eastern invaders, recommended by a brilliancy of description hitherto unknown to the barren fancy of those who inhabited a western region, were rapidly diffused through the continent of Europe. From Spain, by the communication of commercial intercourse through the ports of Toulon and Marseilles, they passed into France. In the latter kingdom they received the earliest and most welcome reception in the district of Armorica or Britany. That province had been chiefly peopled by a colony of Welsh, who had emigrated thither in the fourth century. Hence a close connection subsisted between Wales and Britany for many ages. The fables current in the latter country were collected by Gualtier, Archdeacon of Oxford, who presented them to Geoffrey of Monmouth. His Latin Chronicle, compiled from these materials, forms one of the principal sources of tales of chivalry, and consists entirely of Arabian inventions.

Mr Warton next proceeds to point out the coincidence between fictions undoubtedly Arabic, and the machinery of the early romances. He concludes with maintaining, that if Europe was in any way indebted to the Scalds for the extravagant stories of giants and monsters, these fables must still be referred to an eastern origin, and must have found their way into the north of Europe along with an Asiatic nation, who, soon after Mithridates had been overthrown by Pompey, fled from the dominion of the Romans, and under the conduct of Odin settled in Scandinavia.

These two systems, which may be termed the Gothic and the Arabian, are those which have found the most numerous supporters. As far as relates to the supernatural ornaments of romance (for it is this branch alone that is at present to be considered), the two theories, though very different, are by no means incompatible. From a view of the character of

<sup>1</sup> Hist. of Eng. Poetry, vol. i.



Arabian and Gothic fiction, it appears that neither is exclusively entitled to the credit of having given birth to the wonders of romance. The early framers of the tales of chivalry may be indebted to the northern bards for those wild and terrible images congenial to a frozen region, and owe to Arabian invention that magnificence and splendour, those glowing descriptions and luxuriant ornaments, suggested by the enchanting scenery of an eastern climate.

And wonders wild of Arabesque combine  
With Gothic imagery of darker shade.

Warton's hypothesis of the flight of Odin from the Roman power to Scandinavia, and which exclusively assigns to the eastern nations all the fictions of romance, seems to rest on no solid foundation. Indeed Richardson, in the Preface to his Persian Dictionary, maintains that the whole was a mere Scaldic fable, invented to trace the origin of Gothic and Roman enmity, as the story of Dido and Æneas was supposed to account for the irreconcilable antipathy of Rome and Carthage. Besides, no modification of climate and manners, strong as their influence may be, could have produced the prodigious difference that now appears between Oriental and Gothic fictions; for it cannot be denied, and indeed has been acknowledged by Mr Warton, that the fictions of the Arabians and Scalds are totally different. The fables and superstitions of the northern bards are of a darker shade, and more savage complexion, than those of the Arabians. There is something in their fictions that chills the imagination. The formidable objects of nature with which they were familiarised in their northern solitudes, their precipices, and frozen mountains, and gloomy forests, acted on their fancy, and gave a tincture of horror to their imagery. Spirits, who send storms over the deep, who rejoice in the shriek of the drowning mariner, or diffuse irresistible pestilence; spells which preserve from poison, blunt the weapons of an enemy, or call up the dead from their tombs—these are the ornaments of northern poetry. The Arabian fictions are of a more splendid nature; they are less terrible indeed, but possess more variety and magnificence; they lead us through delightful forests,

and raise up palaces glittering with gold and diamonds.<sup>1</sup>

But while it seems impossible to trace the wilder fictions of the north to an eastern source, it may be observed, on the other hand, that, allowing the early Scaldic odes to be genuine, we find in them no dragons, giants, magic rings, or enchanted castles. These are only to be met with in the compositions of the bards, who flourished after the native vein of Runic fabling had been enriched by the tales of the Arabians. But if we look in vain to the early Gothic poetry for many of those fables which adorn the works of romancers, we shall easily find them in the ample field of oriental fiction. Thus the Asiatic romances and chemical works of the Arabians are full of enchantments, similar to those described in the Spanish, and even in the French, tales of chivalry. Magical rings were an important part of the eastern philosophy, and seem to have given rise to those which are of so much service to the Italian poets. In the eastern *Peris* we may trace the origin of the European fairies in their qualities, and perhaps in their name. The griffin, or hippogriff, of the Italian writers, seems to be the famous *Simurgh* of the Persians, which makes such a figure in the epic poems of *Saadi* and *Ferdusi*.

A great number of these romantic wonders were collected in the east by that idle and lying horde of pilgrims and palmers who visited the Holy Land through curiosity, restlessness, or devotion, and who, returning from so great a distance, imposed every fiction on a believing audience. They were subsequently introduced into Europe by the fablers of France, who took up arms, and followed their barons to the conquest of Jerusalem. At their return they imported into Europe the wonders they had heard, and enriched romance with an infinite variety of oriental fictions.

This mode of introduction of the eastern fables into Europe is much more natural than that pointed out by Mr Warton. The Arabians were not only secluded from the other inhabitants of Spain, but were the objects of their deepest animosity; and hence the Castilians would not readily imbibe the fictions of their enemies. It is unfortunate, too, that the intermediate station from the Moorish

<sup>1</sup> Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poetry.



dominions in Spain should be fixed in Armorica, one of the provinces of France most remote from Grenada.

But if Armorica cannot without difficulty be adopted as a resting place of romantic fiction, far less can it be considered its native soil, as has been assumed in a third hypothesis, maintained by Mr Leyden in his Introduction to the Complaynt of Scotland. It is there argued, that a colony of Britons took refuge in Armorica during the fifth century, from the tyranny of the Saxons, and carried with them the archives which had escaped the fury of their conquerors. The memory of Arthur and his knights was thus preserved in Armorica as fresh as in Wales or Cornwall; and the inhabitants of Armorica were the first people in France with whom the Normans had a friendly intercourse. Besides, the class of French romances relating to Charlemagne ascribed to that monarch the feats of Charles Martel, an Armorican chief, whose exploits would more probably be celebrated by the minstrels of his own country than by Turpin, or any other writer of fabulous chronicles. In short, all the French romances originated in Britany, and all the nations of Europe derived their tales of chivalry from the French.

I am far from meaning to deny that copious materials of fiction were amassed in Britany, and were thence disseminated through France and England; but it cannot be believed that the machinery of romance was created in a country, which, on the most favourable supposition, can only be regarded as a link in the chain of fiction; and far less can it be thought that this pitiful kingdom was the only cradle of that spirit of chivalry, which at one time pervaded all the nations of Europe.

In short, this Armorican system seems to have arisen from mistaking the collection of materials for the sources whence they derived their embellishment.

A fourth hypothesis has been suggested, which represents the machinery and colouring of fiction, the stories of enchanted gardens, monsters, and winged steeds, which have been introduced into romance, as derived from the classical and mythological authors; and as being merely the ancient stories of Greece, grafted on modern manners, and modified by

the customs of the day. The classical authors, it is true, were in the middle ages scarcely known; but the superstitions they inculcated had been prevalent for too long a period, and had made too deep impression on the mind, to be easily obliterated. The mythological ideas which still lingered behind, were diffused in a multitude of popular works. In the Travels of Sir John Mandeville, there are frequent allusions to ancient fable; and, as Middleton has shown that a great number of the popish rites were derived from pagan ceremonies, it is scarcely to be doubted that many classical were converted into romantic fictions. This, at least, is certain, that the classical system presents the most numerous and least exceptionable prototypes of the fables of romance.

In many of the tales of chivalry there is a knight detained from his quest, by the enticements of a sorceress, and who is nothing more than the Calypso or Circe of Homer. The story of Andromeda might give rise to the fable of damsels being rescued by their favourite knight when on the point of being devoured by a sea-monster. The heroes of the Iliad and Æneid were both furnished with enchanted armour; and, in the story of Polyphemus, a giant and his cave are exhibited. Herodotus, in his history, speaks of the Arimaspi, a race of Cyclops who inhabited the north, and waged perpetual war with the tribe of griffons, which guarded mines of gold. The expedition of Jason in search of the golden fleece; the apples of the Hesperides, watched by a dragon; the king's daughter who is an enchantress, who falls in love with and saves the knight, are akin to the marvels of romantic fiction; especially of that sort supposed to have been introduced by the Arabians. Some of the less familiar fables of classical mythology, as the image in the Theogony of Hesiod of the murky prisons in which the Titans were pent up by Jupiter, under the custody of strong armed giants, bear a striking resemblance to the more wild sublimity of the Gothic fictions.

Besides, a great number of those fables now considered as eastern, appear to have been originally Greek traditions, which were carried to Persia in the time of Alexander the Great, and were afterwards returned to Europe, with



the modification they had received from oriental ideas.

Perhaps it may be considered as a confirmation of the classical theory, that, in the 13th century, many classical stories appeared both in prose and in a metrical form, veiled in the garb of romantic fiction. Of this sort are the Latin works of Dares Phrygius, and Dictys Cretensis, concerning the wars of Troy; and the still more ample chronicle of Guido de Colonna, formed from these authors through the medium of the French metrical work of Benoit de Saint More. But these and similar compositions will be more particularly mentioned when we come to treat of the classical romances in which Achilles, Jason, and Hercules, were adopted into chivalry, and celebrated in common with Lancelot, Roland, and Amadis, whom they so nearly resembled in the extravagance of their adventures.

Mr Ritson has successively attempted to ridicule the Gothic, Arabian, and Classical systems; and has maintained, that the origin of romance, in every age or country, must be sought in the different sorts of superstition which have from time to time prevailed. It is, he contends, a vain and futile endeavour, to seek elsewhere for the origin of fable. The French tales of chivalry, in particular, are too ancient to be indebted for their existence to any barbarous nation whatever. In all climes where genius has inspired, fiction has been its earliest product, and every nation in the globe abounds in romances of its own invention, and which it owes to itself alone.

And, in fact, after all, a great proportion of the wonders of romance must be attributed to the imagination of the authors. A belief in superhuman agency seems to have prevailed in every age and country; and monsters of

all sorts have been created by exaggeration or fear. It was natural for the vulgar, in an ignorant age, as we see from the Turks even of the present day, to believe a palace, surpassingly beautiful, to be the work of enchanters. To this we must join the supernatural wonders conjured up by a superstitious fancy, and the natural ones supplied by a mind unacquainted with the constitution of things. Thus to the deceptions of sight, produced by certain dispositions of light and shade—to the reflecting and magnifying power, possessed by mists and clouds, may be partly attributed the prevalence of stories of ghosts, giants, &c., in hilly or cloudy regions intersected by deep valleys and lakes, or by woods, rocks, and rivers.<sup>1</sup> To all this must be added the chimeras produced by indulgence in frolicsome combination. Such were the emblematic cherub of the Hebrews, the compound images of the Egyptians, and the monster of mythology, which was described as

*Prima leo, postrema draco, media inde capella.*

In like manner the griffin is compounded of the lion and eagle; the snake and lizard comprise the analysis, and may have suggested the notion of a dragon.<sup>2</sup> The idea once formed of a being of larger dimensions than his fellow-mortals, it was easy to increase his proportions, and to diversify his shape with every variety of monstrous attribute; and it was natural, as in the case of Goliath, to bestow a ferocity of disposition, corresponding to the terrors of aspect. When once the notion of an enchanter was conceived, it was not difficult to assign him more extensive powers, to render his spells more potent, and their effects more awful or splendid. “Impenetrable armour,” says Mr Hobbes,

<sup>1</sup> Jam tum Religio pavidos terrebat agrestes  
Dira loci; jam tum sylvam saxumque tremebant.

Hoc nemus, hunc, inquit, frondoso vertice collem,  
(Quis Deus, incertum est) habitat deus. Arcades ipsum

Credunt se vidisse Jovem: cum sæpe nigrantem  
Ægida concuteret dextra, nimbosque ciceret.

<sup>2</sup> In Dr Zachary Grey's notes on Hudibras (vol. i. p. 125), there is a story of a man making a dragon from a rat. “Mr Jacob Bobart, botany professor of Oxford, did, about forty years ago, find a dead rat

in the physical garden, which he made to resemble the common picture of dragons, by altering head and tail, and thrusting in taper sharp sticks, which distended the skin on each side, till it mimicked wings. He let it dry as hard as possible. The learned pronounced it a dragon; and one of them sent an accurate description to Magliabecchi, librarian to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Several fine copies of verses were wrote on so rare a subject; but at last Mr Bobart owned the cheat. However, it was looked upon as a master-piece of art, and, as such, deposited in the museum or anatomy school, where I saw it some years after.”



“enchanted castles—invulnerable bodies—iron men—flying horses, and other such things, are easily feigned by them that dare.”

II. Although the theories which have now been detailed may be sufficient, separately or united, to explain the origin of the supernatural ornaments of romance, still they are to be considered merely as embellishments of those chivalrous adventures which occupy by far the greatest proportion of romantic compilation.

The Classical System, allowing it to be well founded with regard to the introduction of giants, hippogriffs, or enchanters, cannot explain the enterprise, the gallantry, and romantic valour, attributed to the knights of chivalry. It is, no doubt, true, that a striking analogy subsists between the manners of the heroic and Gothic times. In both periods robbery was regarded as honourable; or, at least, was not the forerunner of infamy. Bastardy, in both ages, was in peculiar reputation: The most renowned knights of chivalry, as Roland and Amadis, were illegitimate; and the heroes of antiquity were the spurious offspring of demigods and nymphs. The martial games, too, may in their design and their effects be considered as analogous to tournaments. Equal encouragement was given to the bards of Greece, and the minstrels of the middle ages; while Hercules and Bacchus, who are represented as roaming through their country, inflicting punishment on robbers, and extirpating monsters, may be regarded as the knights errant of antiquity. But these resemblances arose merely from a corresponding state of manners; since, at a similar stage of the social progress, similar ideas and customs are prevalent amongst different nations.

Still less can it be believed that the spirit of chivalry received its impulse from the knight errantry of Arabia. This part of his system, Mr Warton has but feebly urged. The nature of Arabian and chivalrous enterprise was by no means the same: nor is it probable that the Europeans derived the dominant part of their manners and institutions from a secluded and a hostile people.

But Dr Percy, and other supporters of the Gothic system, have strenuously maintained that the ideas of chivalry, the soul and sub-

ject of romance, subsisted from the earliest period among the northern nations, and were thence transfused into the fictions of a subsequent age. I conceive, however, that although the rudiments of chivalry may have existed, these notions were not sufficiently general, nor developed, to have become, without farther preparation, the reigning topics of composition. Instances, too, of chivalrous gallantry would have been found in the earlier ages of the history of France, but the manners during the two first races of its monarchs, were far from exhibiting any symptoms of courtesy.

It was under the feudal establishments, subsequently erected in Europe, that chivalry received its vigour, and was invested with the privileges of a regular institution. The chivalry, therefore, unfolded in romance, was the offspring of existing manners, and was merely an exaggerated picture of the actual state of society, of which oppression, anarchy, and restless courage, were the characteristics, but which sometimes produced examples of virtue and enthusiasm.

On the fall of the Roman empire, the lands overrun by the barbarous nations being parcelled out amongst a number of independent chieftains, whose aims and interests frequently interfered, it became an object with every baron to assemble round his person, and to attach, by the strongest bonds, the greatest possible number of young men of rank and courage. The knight, or soldier, at the same time found it necessary to look to some superior for support, against the oppression of other chieftains.

That these ties might be rendered closer, and that the candidate for knighthood might be instructed in courtesy and the art of war, it was customary to remove him at an early age from his father's house to the court or castle of his future patron.

Those who were destined for this sort of life, first acted as pages or varlets: they performed menial services, which at that time were not considered as degrading; they were initiated into the ceremonial of a court, and were at the same time instructed in those bodily exercises which were considered the best preparation for their future career.

The castle in which the candidate for



knighthood received his education, was usually thronged with young persons of a different sex. The intercourse which he thus enjoyed was the best school for the refinements of courtesy : he was taught to select some lady as the mistress of his soul, to whom were referred all his sentiments and actions. Her image was implanted in his heart, amid the fairy scenes of childhood, and was afterwards blended with its recollections. In the middle ages, society was in an intermediate state, removed from the extremes of indigence and luxury, which is most favourable to love ; and that passion was sometimes so nourished by obstacles, that it was exalted into a species of devotion.

Thus the service of a mistress became the future glory and occupation of the candidate for knighthood. At the same time that this duty was inculcated, the emulation of military excellence was excited by the example of his compeers and his patron. When the youth passed to the condition of squire, they attended their master abroad ; if he engaged in battle they took no part in the rencounter, but remained spectators of the combat, and, by attention to the various movements, were instructed in the art of war.

Their time was also, in a great measure, devoted to those sports which were kindred to the occupations of war, and the knowledge of which was an essential preliminary to reception into the order of knighthood.

If that investiture be merely considered as a ceremony, by which young persons destined to the military profession received their arms, its institution, we are told, is as ancient as the age of Charlemagne ; but, if considered as a dignity, which, by certain forms, conferred the first rank in the military order, it cannot easily be traced higher than the 11th century. In the forests of Germany, the initiation of a youth into the profession of a warrior, had been attended with appropriate ceremonies. The chieftain of the tribe decorated him with a sword and armour,—a simple form, which, in the progress of the feudal system, was converted into a mysterious and pompous rite.

On his reception into this order, the knight became bound to the observance of loyalty to his superior, to an impartial distribution of justice to his vassals, to an inviolable adher-

ence to his word, and attention to a courtesy which embellished his other qualities, and softened his other duties. All those who were unjustly oppressed, or conceived themselves to be so, were entitled to claim his protection and succour. The ladies in this respect enjoyed the most ample privileges. Destitute of the means of support, and exposed to the outrages of avarice or passion, they were consigned to his special care, and placed under the guardship of his valiant arm.

The promotion of knights, which sometimes took place after the performance of military exploits, but more frequently on church festivals, coronations, baptisms, or the conclusion of peace, was generally followed by jousts and tournaments. Of these institutions (which were of French invention, and were introduced about the time of the first crusade), the former was of a more private and inferior, the latter of a more pompous and public, description. Both were contrived for the purpose of interesting the mind, when scenes of real warfare did not present themselves, and of displaying, at the same time, the magnificence of the prince or baron.

Some time after the exhibition of a tournament, heralds were despatched through the country, to invite all knights to contend for prizes, and merit the affection of their mistresses.

After the tournaments were proclaimed, they frequently commenced with skirmishing between the squires ; and those who particularly distinguished themselves were allowed to enter the lists with the knights. When it came to the turn of the latter, each knight usually declared himself the servant of some lady, who generally presented him with a token of favour, a veil, a scarf, a bracelet, or, as we are told by Chaucer in his story of Troilus, a pencil of her sleeve, with which he adorned his shield or helmet, and by means of which his person was recognized in all the vehemence of the conflict. If these marks of distinction were carried off during the contest, the lady sent him others to reanimate his courage, and invigorate his exertions.

In all these rencounters certain rules of combat were established, which it was considered infamous to violate. Thus, it was not lawful to wound an adversary's horse, nor to



strike a knight who took off his visor or his helmet.

When the tournaments were concluded, the conquerors were conducted, with much solemnity, to the palace of the prince or baron, where they were attired in the most splendid habits of peace, and disarmed by the hands of the fair: their deeds were inscribed on the records of the heralds at arms, and formed the subject of the lays of the minstrel, which were spread through the neighbouring courts, to excite emulation or envy.

But it would be endless to describe those ceremonies by which tournaments were prepared, accompanied, or followed, and which occupy, I am sure, more than a fourth part of the romances of chivalry, which, in this respect, have merely presented an embellished picture of what actually occurred.

As the genius of chivalry had ever studied to represent in tournaments a faithful picture of the labours and dangers of war, it had ever preserved in war an image of the courtesy which prevailed in tournaments. The desire of pleasing some lady, and of appearing worthy of her, was in the true, as in the fictitious combat, one of the strongest motives that prompted to heroic action. That champion who, while rushing into combat, expressed a wish, as we are told, that his lady beheld him, must also have been stimulated by the hope that she might one day listen to the report of his prowess. In real battle the knight was frequently decked with the device of his mistress, and seriously offered combat to an enemy (not, indeed, as a primary cause of quarrel, but where other grounds of hostility existed), to dispute the pre-eminence of the beauty of their mistresses, and the strength of their attachment. As the valour, too, of a single combatant was conspicuous, and had a considerable influence on the fortune of the day, the same individuals were led frequently to encounter each other, which gave rise to that peculiar species of combat painted in the fables of romance.

The policy which employed love, united with reverence for the ladies, and the thirst of glory, to inspire sentiments of bravery and honour, also joined the heroes of its creation by the ties of friendship. They became united for all their future exploits, or for the accom-

plishment of some exalted emprise, which had a limited object;—and hence the fraternity of arms, by which knights are frequently associated in tales of chivalry.

The restless spirit of the feudal system, and the institutions of chivalry, stimulated their votaries to roam in quest of such adventures for the mere pleasure of achieving them. At their return, the knights were obliged by oath to give the heralds at arms a faithful account of their exploits; an obligation which explains their declining no service of danger, though it was to be performed without witnesses, and might have been avoided without detection.

Enough, I trust, has been said to account for that passion for arms, that love of enterprise, and that extravagant species of gallantry, which were the inevitable consequence of the feudal principles, and are the characteristic features of romance.

Next to those encounters, sought from love of enterprise, or of the fair, the great proportion of combats described in romance may be termed judicial. These took place on a defiance of the challenger to the acceptor, or an accusation against a third party in whom the acceptor was interested, or whose cause he espoused from a spirit of chivalry. Such encounters were suggested by those judicial combats by which, during the middle ages, disputes in civil courts were actually decided. The judge, or magistrate, unable to restrain the violence of litigants, and wishing not to lose all shadow of authority, contented himself with superintending the ceremonies and regulating the forms of a mode of decision so consonant to their temper. This prompt appeal to the sword was also encouraged by a retributive principle in the human mind, which renders it natural to believe that guilt will be punished and innocence vindicated. The impatience of mankind led them to imagine that the intervention ought to take place in this world, and that a solemn appeal to Heaven would be followed by a discovery of its will; an opinion strengthened in those times by means of the clergy, whose interest it was to represent Divine power as dispensing with the laws of nature on the most frivolous occasions.

In consequence, too, of the well-known circumstances which tended to promote the



influence of the church, the real knight was frequently characterized by the appearance, at least, of a warm and zealous devotion. His religious duties consisted in visiting holy places, in depositing his own arms, or those of conquered enemies, in monasteries or temples, in the observance of different festivals, or the practice of exercises of penitence. A bigotted veneration for the monastic profession, even induced many individuals, both knights and princes, to finish their days in spiritual seclusion. Hence a romance of chivalry, as will be afterwards seen, exhibits examples of the most superstitious devotion, and frequently terminates with the retirement of the principal character to a monastery or hermitage.

To the love of war, and of enterprise, to the extravagant gallantry, united with superstition, by which the order of knighthood was distinguished, may be traced the greater proportion of the adventures delineated in romance. There we shall hardly find a motive of action which may not be referred to some of the principles by which society in those times was in reality actuated. On this favourable basis of manners and ideas, the credulity or fancy of the age grafted the supernatural wonders drawn from the sources that have already been traced; and the adventures of knights, embellished by these additional marvels, were exaggerated, extended, and multiplied to infinity by the imagination of romancers.

Such are probably the sources whence fablers have been supplied with the general adventures of chivalry, and the romantic embellishments by which they have been adorned.

III. We must now consider how these adventures and embellishments have been appropriated to individual knights, and turn our attention to the materials which have supplied the leading subjects and the principal characters of romantic composition.

At a time when chivalry excited such universal admiration, and when its effects were at least ostensibly directed to the public good, it was natural that history and fable should be ransacked to furnish examples which might increase emulation.

Arthur and Charlemagne, with their peers,

were the heroes most early and most generally selected for this purpose. The tales concerning these warriors are the first specimens extant of this sort of composition, and from their early popularity, from the beauty of the fictions with which they were in the beginning supported, and from flattering the vanity of the two first nations in Europe, they long continued (diversified indeed, and enlarged by subsequent embellishments) to be the prevalent and favourite topics.

And here it is proper to divide the prose romances, with which we shall be afterwards engaged, into four classes:—1. Those relating to Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. 2. Those connected with Charlemagne and his Paladins. 3. The Spanish and Portuguese romances, which chiefly contain the adventures of the imaginary families of Amadis and Palmerin. 4. What may be termed classical romances, which represent the heroes of antiquity in the guise of romantic fiction.

When we come to treat of the romances relating to Charlemagne, we shall consider the influence of the chronicle attributed to Turpin; but our attention is in the first place demanded by the romances of Arthur and the Round Table, as they form the most ancient and numerous class of which any trace remains. These originated in the early and chimerical legends of Armorica and Wales; the ancient Latin chronicles of this island, which have been founded on them; and the subsequent metrical romances of the English and Norman minstrels.

The Norman conquerors are said first to have become interested in the history and antiquities of Britain during the reign of Stephen, as by that period they had begun to consider themselves natives.

From the writings of Gildas or Nennius, however, they could not easily have extracted a consistent or probable story.

Gildas, or, as Mr Gibbon has styled him, the British Jeremiah, is the author of Lamentations over the Destruction of Britain, which is a whining elegy, and of an epistle, which is a frantic satire on the vices of his countrymen: he has given exaggerated expressions, and distorted facts, instead of presenting an authentic narrative of our early annals, an important object which he might easily have



accomplished; as, according to tradition, he was the son of Caw, a British prince, who lived in the sixth century, and was engaged along with his father in the wars carried on by his countrymen against the Northumbrian Saxons. After the defeat of the Britons at Cattraith, he fled into Wales, and acted as schoolmaster at Bangor.

Nennius is said to have lived about the middle of the ninth century: his work is merely a dry epitome; none even of this abstract does there exist a pure and perfect copy. He is solicitous to quote his authorities, but unfortunately they are not of the most unexceptionable nature, as they consist of the lives of saints and ancient British traditions, on which he bestows credit in proportion to their absurdity. In one of his chapters he has given an outline of the story of Brut, which coincides with the account of Geoffrey of Monmouth; and in chapter fourth he commences a circumstantial detail of the life of Merlin, corresponding, in many respects, with the incidents of romance.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the lachrymal history of Gildas, and the jejune narrative of Nennius, there existed many Welsh traditions, which seem to have occupied the attention of Norman antiquaries.

The annals and poetry of Wales had long laboured in Arthur's commendation. Compelled to yield their country without hope of recovering it, the Welsh avenged themselves on the Saxons by creating, in the person of Arthur, a phantom of glory which towered above every warrior. This apparition seems to have acquired its chief magnitude and terrors in the traditions and legends of Britany. Walter Calenius, or Gualtier, as he is sometimes called, Archdeacon of Oxford, amassed a great collection of these materials during an expedition to Armorica, or Britany, a province from which the royal ancestors of Arthur were believed to have originally issued. On his return to England, the archdeacon presented this medley of historical songs and traditions to Geoffrey of Monmouth, who founded on them a chronicle of Britain, which was written in Latin prose, and is supposed to have been finished about 1140. A notion has

been adopted by some authors, that Geoffrey composed, or invented, most part of the chronicle which he professed to translate from British originals. This idea was first started by Polydore Virgil, who has been followed by later writers; but it has been satisfactorily shown by Mr Ellis that there is no solid reason to doubt the repeated assertions of Geoffrey, that he has merely rendered into Latin the text of Breton authorities. His fabulous relations concerning Brut, Arthur, and Merlin, coincide with those contained in Nennius, or the lives of the Saints, and therefore could not have been invented by Geoffrey. The history, too, bears internal evidence of its Armorican descent, as it ascribes to Hoel, a hero of that country, many of the victories which tradition attributes to Arthur.

But whether this celebrated chronicle be the invention of Geoffrey, or whether it presents a faithful picture of the traditions and fables at that period received as history, there can be no doubt, according to the expression of Mr Ellis, who has given an analysis of the whole work, that it is one of the corner-stones of romance.

This chronicle consists of nine books, each of which is divided into chapters, and commences with the history of Brutus, the son of Sylvius, and grandson of Ascanius, who, being exiled from Italy in consequence of having accidentally slain his father, takes refuge in Greece. There he obtains the hand of Imogen, daughter of a king of that country, and a fleet, with which he arrives in Albion (then only inhabited by a few giants), and founds the kingdom called Britain from his name. There is next presented an account of the fabulous race of Brutus, particularly Arthur, and the whole concludes with the reign of Cadwallader, one of the descendants of that hero.

It would indeed be difficult to extract any authentic history from the chronicle of Geoffrey, but it stamped with the character of veracity the exploits of the early knights of chivalry, and authorized a compilation of the fables related of these fanciful heroes. In the age in which the chronicle appeared, it was difficult to arrive at truth, and error was not easily detected. Criticism was hardly called into existence, and falsehood was adopted with

<sup>1</sup> Ellis's Early Metrical Romances.



an eagerness proportioned to its envelopement in the fascinating garb of wonder. The readers were more ignorant than the authors, and a credulous age readily grafted on stories that were evidently false, incidents that were physically impossible. These were drawn from the sources already pointed out, and were added, according to fancy, to unauthentic histories, which thus degenerated, or were exalted, into romance.

In the chronicle of Geoffrey, indeed, there is nothing said of the exploits of Tristan and Lancelot, or conquest of the Sangreal, which constitute so large a proportion of the Round Table romances. These were subsequent additions, but probably derived, like the chronicle, from ancient British originals, as the names of the heroes, and the scenes of their adventures, are still British.

The work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and such traditionary fables, were the foundation of those tales which appeared in a metrical form, the shape in which, it is acknowledged, romance was first exhibited.

It seems, also, unquestionable, that these metrical romances, though written in England, first appeared in the French language.

In its earliest signification, the term Romance was appropriated to the dialects spoken in the different European provinces that had been subjected to the Roman empire, and of which Latin was the basis, though other materials might enter into the construction. The romance was at one time the colloquial language of Gaul. Subsequently, indeed, various dialects were introduced into that country, but it was still preserved in Normandy; and thence was again diffused through the other provinces north of the Loire.

The earliest specimens of northern French literature are metrical Lives of the Saints. These are supposed to have been translated from Latin compositions about the middle of the eleventh century. In the beginning of the next century they were followed by several didactic works, as the *Bestiarius*, a poem on natural history, by Philip de Thaun, addressed to the queen of Henry I. of England, and a metrical treatise on chronology by the same author. It is believed, however, that no trace of a professed work of fiction—no specimen of what we should now term a

romance, is to be found before the middle of the twelfth century. Then, indeed, the minstrels introduced a great variety of their own compositions, and formed new combinations from the numerous materials in their possession.

Before this time the language in which they wrote had passed into England by means of the Norman Conquest. The English, indeed, previous to this event had been prepared for the reception of the French language. Edward the Confessor had been educated in France, and, on his accession to the throne of England, promoted his continental favourites to the highest dignities. Under their influence the nation began to lay aside its English customs, and to imitate the language and manners of the French. (*Ingulph. Hist. Croyl. p. 62. ap. Tyrwhitt, vol. iv.*) These fashions having been adopted in compliance with the caprice of the reigning monarch, might probably have expired under his successors; but before this extirpation could be effected, the French language, by means of the Norman Conquest, became interwoven with the new political system. The king, the chief officers of state, and a great proportion of the nobility, were Normans, and understood no tongue but that of their own country. Hence the few Saxons who were still admitted at court had the strongest inducements to acquire the language of their conquerors. William the First also distributed a share of his acquisitions among his great barons who had attended him; and who, when it was in their power, retired from court to their feudal domains, followed by vassals from among their countrymen. Hence the language which was used in their common conversation and judicial proceedings, was diffused through the most distant provinces. All ecclesiastical preferments, too, were bestowed on Norman chaplains, and those who were promoted to abbacies were anxious to stock their monasteries with foreigners. Thus the higher orders of the clergy and laity spoke the French language, while the lower retained the use of their native tongue, but frequently added a knowledge of the dialect of the conquerors. Matters continued in this state with little variation during the reigns of the Norman kings and the first monarchs of the house of Plantagenet.



The Norman minstrels, accordingly, who had followed their barons to the English court, naturally wrote and recited the metrical compositions in the language which was most familiar to themselves, and which, being most prevalent, procured them the greatest number of readers of rank and distinction.

From the early connection of the Normans with the people of Britany, the minstrels had received from the latter those traditions, the remains of which they brought over with them to England.<sup>1</sup>

These they found in a more perfect state among the Welsh of this island. The invasion of the Normans, and the overthrow of the Saxons, were events beheld with exultation by the descendants of the *aboriginal* Britons, who readily associated with those who had avenged them on their bitterest enemies; while to the Normans the legends of the Welsh must have been more acceptable than those of the Saxons. In the long course of political intrigue, carried on between the period of the Norman invasion and final subjugation of Wales, an intercourse must have taken place between that country and England sufficient to account for the interchange of any literary materials. The British lays communicated to the French minstrels in England, were seldom committed to writing. Hence the same story was repeated with endless variations, and this system of traditional incident was added to the more stable relations contained in the chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth.

It seems to be generally believed that French romances in rhyme appeared in England and Normandy previous to any attempt of this nature at the court of Paris. This is evinced by the more liberal patronage of the English princes, the style and character of the romances themselves, and the persons to whom the poems were originally addressed.

The oldest of these French metrical romances is one founded on the chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and entitled *Le Brut*: it was written in the year 1155, by Robert Wace, a native of Jersey, who brought down his work from the time of the imaginary Brutus to the death of Cadwallader, the æra where Geoffrey

ends; but it was subsequently carried on by Gaimar and others to the age of William Rufus. Wace is also the author of *Le Roman le Rou*, a fabulous and metrical history of the Dukes of Normandy from the time of Rollo. These metrical histories soon introduced compositions professedly fictitious, in which the indefatigable Wace first led the way. His *Chevalier au Lion* seems to be one of the earliest romances in rhyme which has descended to our knowledge. In the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century, an infinite variety of French metrical romances on the subject of Arthur and his knights of the Round Table appeared in England and Normandy, as the *Sangreal*, *Perceval*, &c., written by Chrestien de Troyes, Menessier, and others.

About the same period a great number of French romances, in which classical heroes are celebrated, were founded on the history of the Trojan war. Few of these, however, at least at an early period, were converted into prose, while the metrical romances relating to the Round Table, either from accident or from flattering the vanity and prejudices of a nation by the celebration of its fictitious heroes, have, for the most part, been reduced into prose, and constituted, thus transformed, a formidable compilation, which came in time to supersede the metrical originals.

These prose romances, which form the proper subject of our enquiry, were mostly written in the course of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. It is extremely difficult, however, to ascertain the precise date of the composition of each, or to point out the authors by whom they were written.

The *data* by which we might attempt to fix the chronology of the prose romances, and which, at first view, would appear to be at once easy and certain, are, 1. The antiquity of the language; 2. The manners represented; since in ancient romances a delineation is given not of the customs, ceremonies, or dress of the period in which the imaginary heroes are feigned to have existed, but of those which prevailed at the time of the composition of the work. The tournaments in particular, with a description of which every romance is filled, should assist in this research. Thus, at the institution of these spectacles, the

<sup>1</sup> Ellis's *Early Metrical Romances*, vol. i.



persons who had been long admitted into the order of chivalry, contended during the first day, and the new knights on the succeeding ones. In process of time the new knights opened the tournament, and the squires were allowed to joust with them, but at length the distinctions which had formerly existed between the knight and the squire became, in a great measure, confounded. The light, however, that might naturally be expected to be drawn hence, has been darkened by the authors of the prose romances having servilely copied, in some instances, their metrical prototypes, and thus, without warning, represented the manners of a preceding age. In most instances, I believe, the prose romances were accommodated to the opinions and manners subsisting at the period of this new fabrication; but it is impossible to say with certainty what has been adopted, and what is original.

3. The name of the person to whom the romance is addressed, or at whose solicitation it is said to be written, may be of use in ascertaining the date. But the authors title their patrons in so general a way, that the inference to be drawn is vague and uncertain. Their works are written at the desire of King Henry or King Edward of England, and hence the period of their composition is only limited to the reign of one of the numerous monarchs who bore these names.

4. The date of the publication may be of assistance in fixing the chronology of some of the later romances of chivalry. But even this trifling aid is in most instances denied, the earliest impression being generally without date. Hence I am afraid that these *data* will be found, in most cases, to afford but feeble and uncertain assistance.

With respect to the authors of the prose romances, it may be in the first place remarked, that these compositions were not announced to the reader as works of mere imagination, but, on the contrary, were always affirmed by their authors (who threw much opprobrium on the lying metrical romances) to contain matter of historical fact. Nor was this doubted by the simplicity of the readers; and the fables which had been disbelieved while in verse, were received without suspicion on their conversion into prose. Hence it became the interest of the

real authors, in order to give their works the stamp of authority, to abjure the metrical romances, from which they were in fact compiled, and to feign either that these fables had been translated by them from Latin, or revised from ancient French prose, in which they had been originally written,—averments which should never be credited unless otherwise established to be true.

But some writers have supposed that this system of mendacity was carried still farther, and that fictitious names were generally assumed by the real authors. "Those," says Mr Ritson, "whose names appear as the authors of the old prose romances, are mostly men of straw: Of this sort are Robert de Borron, the pretended author, or rather translator, of Lancelot; Lucus Sieur de Gast, the translator from Latin into French of the romance of Tristrem; Gualter Map, who, though he really existed and was a poet of some eminence, was not in reality the author of *Histoire de Roy Artus*; and Rusticien de Pise, who was feigned to have translated *Gyron the Courteous*." It is in the prefaces alone that any notices can be found with regard to the old romances or their authors; but it requires some discernment to discover what is true, and to distinguish correct information from what was merely thrown out in jest, or intended to give the stamp of authority with the vulgar. In general the account given in their prefaces by the romancers concerning their fellow-labourers is accurate, but everything relating to themselves, or their own works, must be received with great suspicion.

Any information that can be elsewhere derived is in the highest degree inconsistent. Thus, the metrical *Perceval*, according to the authors of the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, was written by Raoul de Beauvais. According to Tyrwhitt, it was composed previous to 1191, in sixty thousand verses, by Chretien de Troyes, and from this, he says, was formed the French prose translation printed in 1530. Ritson informs us, that, according to some, Menessier was the author of the metrical *Perceval*: now, if we believe the authors of the *Bibliothèque*, this Menessier was the prose translator. The Abbe de la Rue says that *Perceval* was written in prose by Chretien de Troyes. I may add to these elucidations, that



Warton alleges it was written in rhyme by Chretien de Troyes, but that it also appeared in a metrical shape by Menessier, and that the prose version is formed from the latter poem. Much has been said by modern writers of Warton's inaccuracy, but his account of the romance of Perceval is the only one which has any pretensions to correctness. On the whole, however, I am inclined to believe that too early a period has been generally assigned to the composition of the prose romances of chivalry, and the existence of their authors. —Rusticien de Pise, the author of *Meliadus* and *Gyron*, and whom some writers represent as living in the reign of Henry I., talks in one of his prefaces of the expedition of Edward I. to the Holy Land, and he mentions Robert de Borron, the author of *Merlin*, and Helye de Borron, who wrote part of *Tristan*, as his companions in literature and arms.

It will not excite surprise that the earliest of the French romances should be devoted to the celebration of a British monarch, when we consider that they were not written for the amusement of the French, but of the English nation. From the popularity of the British tales among the Norman minstrels, they obtained, as has been already shown, an early and extensive acquaintance with the traditional history of Arthur. He was the theme of their metrical compositions, and hence became the favourite hero in the prose romances of chivalry.

Of these, the earliest relating to that fabulous monarch, is the romance or book of

### MERLIN.

The demons, alarmed at the number of victims which daily escaped their fangs since the birth of our Saviour, held a council of war. It was there resolved that one of their number should be sent to the world with

instructions to engender on some virgin a child, who might act as their vicegerent on earth, and thus counteract the great plan that had been laid for the salvation of mankind. With this view the infernal deputy, having assumed a human form, insinuated himself into the confidence, and obtained admittance into the house, of a wealthy Briton. The fiend (though this was foreign from the purpose of his mission) could not resist embracing an early opportunity of strangling his host, and then proceeded to attempt the seduction of his three daughters, which was more peculiarly an object of his terrestrial sojourn. The youngest of the family alone resisted his artifices, but she at length experienced the fate of her sisters, while rendered unconscious by sleep. On awakening, she was much perplexed by what had occurred, and confessed herself to a holy man called Blaise, who had all along been her protector, but who acknowledged himself altogether incompetent to account for the events of the preceding night.

The judges of the land, who soon after discovered the pregnancy of the young lady, were about to condemn her to death, according to the law and custom of the country;<sup>1</sup> but Blaise represented that the execution should be at least deferred, as the child, who was about to come into the world, ought not to be involved in the punishment of the mother. The criminal was accordingly shut up in a tower, where she gave birth to the celebrated *Merlin*, whom Blaise instantly hurried to the baptismal font, and thus frustrated the hopes of the demons when on the verge of completion. *Merlin*, however, in spite of this timely redemption, retained many marks of his unearthly origin, of which his premature elocution afforded an early and unequivocal symptom. Immediately after his baptism, the mother took the child in her arms, and reproached him as the cause of the

<sup>1</sup> In another old romance, a regulation of this sort is said to have existed in France. *C'estoit la coutume, en ce tems, telle, que quand une femme estoit grosse, que ce n'estoit de son Mari, ou qu'elle ne fust mariée, on l'ardoit.* (*L. Hist. plaisante du noble Siperis de Vinevaux et de ses dix sept fils.*) In the *Orlando Furioso* this punishment is attributed to the law of Scotland;

L'aspra legge di Scozia empia e severa :

Rinaldo on hearing of it, exclaims with indignation,

Sia maladetto chi tal legge pose,  
E maladetto chi la può patire;  
Debitamente muore una Crudele,  
Non chi da vita al suo amator fidele.—(C. 4.)



melancholy death she was about to suffer. But the infant smiling to her, replied, Fear not, my mother, you will not die on my account. Accordingly the prosecution being resumed, and Merlin, the *corpus delicti*, being produced in court, he addressed the judges, and revealed the illegitimacy of one of their number, who was not the son of his reputed father, but of a Prior; and who thus, out of regard to his own mother, was forced to prevent the condemnation of Merlin's.

At this time there reigned in Britain a king called Constans, who had three sons, Moines, Pendragon, and Uter. Moines, soon after his accession, which happened on the death of his father, was vanquished by the Saxons, in consequence of being deserted by his seneschal Vortiger, formerly the chief support of his throne. Growing unpopular, through misfortune, he was soon after killed by his subjects, and the traitor Vortiger chosen in his place.

As the newly-elected monarch was in constant dread of the preferable claims of Uter and Pendragon, the surviving sons of Constans, he began to construct a strong tower for defence. This bulwark, however, three times fell to the ground without any apparent cause, when brought by the workmen to a certain height. The king consulted seven *astronomers* on this phenomenon in architecture. These sages having studied the signs, avowed to each other that they could not solve the mystery. But in the course of their observations they had incidentally discovered that their lives were threatened by a child, who had lately come into the world without the intervention of a mortal father. They therefore resolved to deceive the king, in order to secure their own safety; and announced to him, as the result of their calculations, that the edifice would abide by the ordinary rules of architecture if the blood of a child of this genealogy were shed on the first stone of the foundation.

Though the king could not doubt the efficacy of this expedient, his plans were not much promoted by the response, for the difficulty was to find a child of this anomalous lineage. That nothing, however, might be wanting on his part, he despatched messengers over all the kingdom. Two of his emis-

saries fell in with certain children who were playing at cricket. Merlin was of the party, and, having divined the cause of their search, instantly made himself known to them. When brought before the king, he informed his majesty of the imposition of the astrologers, and showed that the instability of the tower was occasioned by two immense dragons which had fixed their residence under it; and, being rivals, shook its foundation with their mighty combats. The king invited all his barons to an ensuing contest announced by Merlin. Workmen having dug to an immense depth below the tower, discovered the den of these monsters, who gratified the court with the exhibition that was expected. The red dragon was totally defeated by his white opponent, and only survived for three days the effects of this terrible encounter.

These animals, however, had not been solely created for the amusement of the court, for, as Merlin afterwards explained, they typified in the most unequivocal manner the invasion of Uter and Pendragon, the surviving brothers of Moines. These two princes had escaped into Britany on the usurpation of Vortiger, but now made a descent upon England. Vortiger was defeated in a great battle, and afterwards burned alive in the castle he had taken such pains to construct.

On the death of Vortiger, Pendragon ascended the throne. This prince had great confidence in the wisdom of Merlin, who became his chief adviser, and frequently entertained the king, while he astonished his brother Uter, who was not aware of his qualifications, by his skill in necromancy.

About this time a dreadful war arose between the Saxons and Britons. Merlin obliged the royal brothers to swear fidelity to each other, but foretold that one of the two must fall in the first battle. The Saxons were totally routed in the fight, and Pendragon, having fulfilled the prediction of Merlin, was succeeded by Uter, who now assumed, in addition to his own name, the appellation of Pendragon.

Merlin still continued a court favourite. At the request of Uter he transported by magic art enormous stones from Ireland to form the sepulchre of Pendragon; and next proceeded to Carduel (Carlisle), to prepare



the Round Table, at which he seated fifty or sixty of the first nobles in the country, leaving an empty place for the Sangreal.

Soon after this institution the king invited all his barons to the celebration of a great festival, which he proposed holding annually at Carduel.

As the <sup>k</sup> nights had obtained permission from his majesty to bring their ladies along with them, the beautiful Yguerne accompanied her husband, the Duke of Tintadiel, to one of these anniversaries. The king became deeply enamoured of the duchess, and revealed his passion to Ulsius, one of his counsellors.<sup>1</sup> Yguerne withstood all the inducements which Ulsius held forth to prepossess her in favour of his master, and ultimately disclosed to her husband the attachment and solicitations of the monarch. On hearing this, the duke instantly removed from court with Yguerne, and without taking leave of Uter. The king complained of this want of duty to his council, who decided that the duke should be summoned to court, and if refractory should be treated as a rebel. As he refused to obey the citation, the king carried war into the estates of his vassal, and besieged him in the strong castle of Tintadiel,<sup>2</sup> in which he had shut himself up. Yguerne was confined in a fortress at some distance, which was still more secure. During the siege, Ulsius informed his master that he had been accosted by an old man, who promised to conduct the king to Yguerne, and had offered to meet him for that purpose on the following morning. Uter proceeded with Ulsius to the rendezvous. In an old blind man, whom they found at the appointed place, they recognized the enchanter Merlin, who had assumed that appearance; he bestowed on the king the form of the Duke of Tintadiel, while he endowed himself and Ulsius with the figures of his grace's two squires. Fortified by this triple metamorphosis, they proceeded to the residence of Yguerne, who, unconscious of the deceit, received the king as her husband.

This deception has been evidently suggested by the classical story of Jupiter and Alcmena. The duke corresponds to Amphytrion, and

Merlin to the Mercury of mythology; while Arthur, who, as we shall find, was the fruit of the amour, holds the same rank in the romantic as Hercules in the heroic ages.

The fraud of Merlin was not detected, and the war continued to be prosecuted by Uter with the utmost vigour. At length the duke was killed in battle, and the king, by the advice of Merlin, espoused Yguerne. Soon after the marriage she gave birth to Arthur, whom she believed to be the son of her former husband, as Uter had never communicated to her the story of his assumed appearance.

After the death of Uter, there was an interregnum in England, as it was not known that Arthur was his son. This prince, however, was at length chosen king, in consequence of having unfixed, from a miraculous stone, a sword which two hundred and one of the most valiant barons in the realm had been singly unable to extract. At the beginning of his reign, Arthur was engaged in a civil war, as the mode of his election, however judicious, was disapproved by some of the barons; and when he had at length overcome his domestic enemies, he had long wars to sustain against the Gauls and Saxons.

In all these contests the art of Merlin was of great service to Arthur, as he changed himself into a dwarf, a harp player, or a stag, as the interest of his master required; or, at least, threw on the bystanders a spell to fascinate their eyes, and cause them to see the thing that was not. The notion of these transformations seems to have been suggested by the power ascribed in classical times to Proteus and Vertumnus,

*Nunc equa, nunc ales, modo bos, modo cervus abibat.*

On one occasion Merlin made an expedition to Rome, entered the king's palace in the shape of an enormous stag, and in this character delivered a formal harangue, to the utter amazement of one called Julius Cæsar, not the Julius whom the knight Mars killed in his pavilion, but him whom Gauvain slew because he had defied king Arthur.

At length this renowned magician disappeared entirely from England. His voice alone

declivity towards the sea, on the northern coast of Cornwall.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Some vestiges of the castle of Tintadiel, or Tintagel, remain on a rocky peninsula of prodigious



was heard in a forest, where he was enclosed in a bush of hawthorn ; he had been entrapped in this awkward residence by means of a charm he had communicated to his mistress Viviane, who, not believing in the spell, had tried it on her lover. The lady was sorry for the accident, but there was no extracting her admirer from his thorny coverture.

The earliest edition of this romance was printed at Paris, in three volumes folio, 1498 ; this impression, which has become extremely rare, was followed by another in quarto, which is much less esteemed than the other, but is also exceedingly scarce.

Though seldom to be met with, the *Roman de Merlin* is one of the most curious romances of the class to which it belongs. It comprehends all the events connected with the life of the enchanter from his supernatural birth to his magical disappearance, and embraces a longer period of interesting fabulous history, than most of the works of chivalry. Some of the incidents are entertaining, and no part of the narrative is complicated. Yguerne, though she appears but for a short while, is a more interesting female character than is usually portrayed in romances of chivalry. The passion of Uter for this lady, which is well described, is by much the most interesting part of the work ; and though the marvellous pervades the whole production, it is not carried to such an extravagant length as in the tales of the Round Table, by which it was succeeded. The language, which is very old French, is remarkable for its beauty and simplicity : Indeed, the romance bears every where the marks of very high antiquity. It has been generally attributed to Robert de Borron, to whom so many other works of the same nature have been assigned. This author lived in the time of Henry III. and Edward I., as Rusticien de Pise, who lived during these reigns, calls him, in his prologue to *Meliadus*, his companion in arms.

But, great as the antiquity of the romance no doubt is, its author can lay but little claim to originality of invention. Most of the incidents appear in the chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth, from which they were transferred into the romance through the medium of the *Brut*, a metrical version of that fabulous history, written by Wace.

The notion of procreating demons, which forms the basis of the romance, and accounts for Merlin's supernatural powers, seems to have been taken from the *Vita Merlini*, the *Life of the Scotch Merlin*, by Geoffrey of Monmouth :—

“ Et sibi multotiens ex aere corpore sumpto  
Nobis apparent, et plurima saepe sequuntur ;  
Quin etiam coitu mulieres aggrediuntur ;  
Et faciunt gravidas, generantes more profano.”

It would appear from Jocelin's *Life of St Kentegern*, the account of whose birth resembles that of Merlin, that our grandmothers were frequently subject to nocturnal attacks of the nature described in the romance ; “ *audivimus, frequenter sumptis transfigiis puellarem pudicitiam expugnatam esse, ipsamque defloratam corruptorem sui minime nosse. Potuit aliquid hujusmodi huic puellæ accidisse.*”<sup>1</sup> Yet, perhaps, the account of the birth and early part of the life of Merlin may be traced to a yet more ancient and venerable source.

At an early period the story of Merlin became current and popular in most of the countries in Europe. The French romance, of which we have given an abstract, was translated into Italian by Antonio Tedeschi, a Venetian, and was written by him while in the prison of Florence, where he was confined for debt. The history of Merlin appeared also in English, in a metrical form, in which the incidents are nearly the same with those in the French romance.

Merlin is frequently introduced in the subsequent tales of chivalry, but chiefly on great occasions, and at a period subsequent to his death, or magical disappearance. He has also found his way into the English metrical version of the *Seven Wise Masters*. Herowdes, emperor of Rome, had seven sages in his council, who abused the confidence reposed in them by their master. This emperor, while one day preparing to go on a hunting party, is suddenly struck blind ;—the wise men are convoked, and ordered to account for his majesty's obstructed vision. They are forced to confess that they are unprepared with an answer, but are afterwards advised by an old

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton's *Vitæ Antiquæ*, p. 200. ap. Ellis's *Specimens*, p. 211. vol. i. A curious tradition of this sort is related in Boethius' *History of Scotland*.



man to consult the invisible Merlin. Two of their number are sent on this errand, who find out the enchanter with great difficulty, and bring him to the king. Merlin is prepared with a prescription, and informs his majesty that nothing more is necessary to obtain complete restoration to sight, than striking off the heads of the seven sages. Herowdes, delighted to find that his cure could be so cheaply purchased, caused his counsellors to be successively beheaded, and the recovery of his sight coincided with the decapitation of his last minister.

Nor have the fables connected with Merlin been confined to idle tales or romances of chivalry, but have contributed to the embellishment of the finest productions. In the romantic poems of Italy, and in Spenser, Merlin is chiefly represented as a magical artist. The fountain of love in the Orlando Innamorato (l. 3.), is said to have been the work of Merlin; and in the 26th canto of the Orlando Furioso, there is described a fountain, one of four which the enchanter formed in France. It was of the purest marble, on which coming events were portrayed in the finest sculpture. In the same poem, Bradamante arrives one night at the lodge of Tristan (Rocca di Tristano), where she is conducted into a hall adorned with prophetic paintings, which demons had executed in a single night under the direction of Merlin.

In the third canto of the Rinaldo, the knight of that name arrives with Isolero at two equestrian statues; the one of Lancelot, the other of Tristan, both sculptured by the art of Merlin. Spenser represents Merlin as the artificer of the impenetrable shield, and other armour of Prince Arthur (Faery Queene, b. i. c. 7.), and of a mirror in which a damsel viewed her lover's shade. But Merlin had nearly obtained still higher distinction, and was on the verge of being raised to the summit of fabulous renown. The greatest of our poets, it is well known, before fixing on a theme more worthy of his genius, intended to make the fabulous history of Britain the sub-

ject of an epic poem, as he himself announces in his Epitaphium Damonis:—

“Ipse ego Dardanias Rutupina per aequora puppes  
Dicam, et Pandrasidos regnum vetus Inogeniæ,  
Brennumque Arviragumque duces, priscumque  
Belinum,  
Tum gravidam Arturo fatali fraude Iogernen,  
Mendaces vultus assumptaque Gorlois arma  
Merlini dolus.—”

It has been mentioned, in the abstract just given of the romance of Merlin, that when the magician, who is the chief character in the work, prepared the round table at Carduel, he left a place vacant for the St Graal, the vessel from which our Saviour was supposed to have drunk at the last supper, and which was afterwards filled with the blood which flowed from the wounds with which he was pierced at the crucifixion. The early history of this relic, the quest of which is the most fertile source of adventures to the knights of the Round Table, is related in the romance entitled

#### ST GRAAL, or SANGREAL,

so called from Grasal, which signifies a cup in old French, or from the Sanguis Realis, with which it was supposed to have been filled. This work is one of the dullest of the class to which it belongs; it seems written with a different intention, and on a different plan, from the other romances of the Round Table, and has much the appearance of having come from the pen of an ecclesiastic. The name of the author, however, and the sources whence his composition was derived, are involved in the same darkness and inconsistent information, which obscure the origin of so many similar productions.

Mr Warton has given an extract from a metrical Sangreal, a fragment consisting of 40,000 lines, which was written by Thomas Lonelich, in the reign of Henry VI. This is neither the original, nor a paraphrase, of the French prose Sangreal, but is a version of that part of Lancelot du Lac which contains the

<sup>1</sup> L'Histoire, ou le Roman du Saint-Greal, qui est le fondement et le premier de la Table Ronde; lequel traite de plusieurs matiers recreatives, ensemble la queste du dict Saint-Greal faite par Lancelot, Galaad,

Boort et Perceval, qui est le dernier livre de la Table Ronde; traduit du Latin en Rime Francoise, et de Rime en Prose.



adventures of the Sangreal. With regard to the history of the Sangreal, properly so called, we are informed in the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, that it was first written in verse by Chretien de Troyes, towards the end of the 12th century; that it was thence translated into Latin prose in the 13th; and, finally, in the 14th century, into French prose, by Gautier Map, by order, as he informs us, of his lord Henry, by whom, as he was an Englishman, the authors of the *Bibliothèque* suppose that he means Henry III. This, however, would place the composition not in the 14th, but in the preceding century, as that monarch died in 1272. Tyrwhitt says there is a tradition that Gautier Map was the author of the *St Greal* in French. There is also a passage in the romance of *Tristan* which is consistent with this information. "Quant Boort ot conte l'aventure del Saint Graal, teles come eles estoient avenues, eles furent mises en escrit, gardees en lamere de Salibreres dont Mestre Galtier Map l'estrest a faist son livre du Saint Graal, per l'amor du Roy Herri, son senger qui fist l'estoire tralater del Latin en Romanz." From a passage, however, in *Lancelot du Lac*, we are led to believe that Map wrote the Sangreal in Latin, while some modern writers have attributed the French work to Robert de Borron. Ritson, as has been already mentioned, considers Borron as a fictitious personage, and ridicules the notion of Map having ever written a romance. At whatever time, and by whatever author it was composed, the Sangreal was first printed in French prose, in 1516, two volumes folio, by Gallyot du Pré, and afterwards, 1523, folio: both of these editions are so rare, that the Sangreal is the scarcest romance of the Round Table.

From the extract given by M. Barbazan of the poetical Sangreal, it appears to commence with the genealogy of our Saviour, and to detail the whole of the Sacred History. The prose romance does not go so far back. It begins with Joseph of Arimathea, who was long believed in this country to have existed for many centuries after the crucifixion. Matthew Paris informs us, that an Armenian bishop who came to England in his time, related that this Jewish senator had dined at

his table before he left the east. At the end of every century he fell into a fit of ecstasy, and when he recovered he returned to the same state of youth in which he was when his master suffered.

The author of the Sangreal has availed himself of this popular tradition;—he in the first place relates, that, on the day of the crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea obtained possession of the *Hanap*, or cup, from which his master had, on the preceding evening, drunk with his apostles. Before he interred the body of our Saviour, he filled the vessel with the blood which flowed from his wounds;<sup>1</sup> but the exasperated Jews soon after deprived him of this holy relic, and sent him to a prison in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Here his departed master appeared to him, and comforted him in his captivity, by restoring the sacred *Hanap*. At length, in the forty-second year of his confinement, he was freed from prison by Titus, the Roman emperor. After his deliverance he proceeded to preach the gospel in this country, and, on his way, converted to Christianity, Enelach, king of Sarraz, who was thus enabled to conquer the Egyptians, with whom he was at war. After the arrival of Joseph with the sacred cup in Britain, the romance is chiefly occupied with the miracles accomplished by the Sangreal;—the preparation of the Round Table by Arthur, who left a place vacant for this relic; and, finally, the achievements performed by his knights to recover this treasure, which had fallen into the possession of king Pecheur, so called from his celebrity as an angler, or his notoriety as a sinner. The author of the romance has enlivened his story with some curious adventures, which happened to the knights of the Round Table, during the period of this quest; but the incidents related are, I think, on the whole, less interesting than those generally contained in the class of fictions with which we are at present engaged.

The history of the Sangreal is the commencement of a series of romances, in which the acquisition of that relic is a leading object. Its quest and attainment is continued in

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 8.



PERCEVAL,<sup>1</sup>

a romance of the fifteenth century, where a great deal is written concerning its utility and final disappearance.

I believe the only impression of Perceval is that of Paris, in 1530. It is not known who was the author of the prose romance,<sup>2</sup> but in his preface he informs us that Philip of Flanders had ordered his chronicler to compile the story of Perceval; but both Philip and his chronicler having died shortly after, Joanne, countess of Flanders, ordered Menessier, *ung sien familier orateur*, to continue what his predecessor had merely commenced. His metrical composition was the chief foundation of the prose romance; but its author has also availed himself of the metrical work on the same subject written by Chretien de Troyes in the 12th century.

Though the conquest of the Sangreal be the chief subject of the latter part of Perceval, the early chapters are merely the story of an artless and inexperienced youth's first entrance into the world. The father and two elder brothers of Perceval had fallen in tournaments or battle; and hence, as the last hope of the family, he had been kept at home by his mother, who resided in Wales, where he was brought up in total ignorance of arms and chivalry.

At length, however, Perceval is roused to a desire of military renown, by meeting in a forest five knights, arrayed in complete armour. When he has determined on leaving the family mansion, his mother gives him some curious instructions concerning the duties of a knight. After receiving these admonitions, he sets out for the court of Arthur, and on his way falls in with various adventures, in the course of which he makes some whimsical applications of the lessons of his mother.<sup>3</sup>

On his arrival at Carduel, where Arthur then resided, he encounters a knight in red armour leaving the palace, and is asked by him where he is going, to which Perceval

replies, "To King Arthur to demand your armour." In prosecution of this equitable claim, Perceval, without farther ceremony, enters on horseback into the hall, where Arthur is seated with his knights. This mode of presentation was not uncommon in the ages of chivalry. Stow mentions, that when Edward II. was sitting royally with his peers, solemnizing the feast of Pentecost, there entered a woman attired like a minstrel, sitting on a great horse trapped, who rode about the table showing pastime. In the legend of king Estmere, the prince of that name introduces himself in a similar manner;—

"King Estmere he stabled his steede  
Sae fayre at the hall bord;  
The froth that came from his brydle bitte,  
Light in Kyng Bremor's beard."

Arthur at this time happened to be holding full court (Cour Pleniére.) At the time in which Perceval was written, the French sovereigns, from whose customs the royal manners in these romances are frequently described, did not, as afterwards, maintain a court continually open, but lived shut up with their families and the officers of their household, and only displayed their magnificence on certain occasions, which occurred three or four times a year. These festivals are said to have owed their origin to the diets convoked by Charlemagne to deliberate on state affairs, which were re-established by Hugh Capet;—they were announced by heralds at the town or castle where they were to be celebrated,—the barons and strangers were invited, and the entertainment consisted in feasts and dancing, joined to the exercise of the talents of the minstrel.

It was on a solemn occasion of this nature, that Perceval behaved with the bluntness that has been described. Arthur, however, promises to make him a knight if he will dismount from his horse, and pay his vows to God and the saints. But Perceval would only receive the honour he solicited on horseback, because,

<sup>1</sup> Le Roman de Vaillant Perceval, Chevalier de la Table Ronde, lequel acheva les adventures du Saint Greal, avec aucuns faits belliques du Chevalier Gauvain et autres.

<sup>2</sup> Concerning the author and origin of this romance, see above, p. 68. Besides the works on the

subject of Perceval which are there mentioned, there is a metrical romance, Percyvell of Galles, which was preserved in the library of Lincoln cathedral, and is supposed to have been written by Robert de Thornton, in the reign of Henry VI.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, No. 9.



as he said, the knights he met in the forest were not dismounted; and he added another condition to his reception into the order of knighthood, which was, that the king should grant him permission to acquire the arms of the Red Knight, who, it seems, was the mortal enemy of Arthur. On expressing his intention to gain them by his own valour, Lreux, the king's seneschal, who is introduced in most of the romances of the Round Table, but is always represented as a detractor, a coward, and a boaster, nearly resembling the character which Shakspeare has painted in so many of his dramas, begins to jeer Perceval. On this a damsel, who, we are informed, had not smiled for ten years, comes up to Perceval, and tells him, smiling, that if he live he will be one of the bravest and best of knights. The seneschal, exasperated at her good humour and the prospects held out to Perceval, gives the maiden a blow on the cheek; and, seeing the king's fool sitting near a chimney, kicks him into the fire between the two andirons, because the fool had been accustomed to say that this damsel would not smile till she had seen him who would be the flower of chivalry. A fool was a common appendage to the courts of those days in which the romance was written. This embellishment was derived from the Asiatic princes. In Europe, a fool was the ornament held in next estimation to a dwarf; his head was shaved, he wore a white dress with a yellow bonnet, and carried a bell or bawble in his hand. If, however, the scene which took place between the fool, the seneschal, and damsel, be a just picture of the manners of a court in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the presence of a king must in those days have inspired very little reverence.

Perceval having at length been knighted on his own terms, sets out in quest of the Red Knight, and obtains the arms he desired by slaying him in single combat; but as he did not understand how to open or close a helmet, and knew nothing of the fabric of the other parts of armour, he would have been much puzzled without the assistance of his squire Guyon, who aids in arming him; and also tries to persuade him to change his under dress for that of the knight he had slain. I will never, replied he, quit the good hempen

shirt that my mother made me. Thus Perceval would only take the armour of the knight, and the squire is obliged to put the spurs over the gathers which his master would on no account part with. He then teaches him to put his foot in the stirrup, for Perceval had never used stirrup nor spur, but had rode without saddle, and urged on his horse with a stick. The squire then carries the news of Perceval's success to the court of Arthur, to the great joy of the fool, and consternation of the seneschal.

After this, chance (which does so much in all romances of chivalry) conducts Perceval to the house of a knight who instructs him in the exercises and duties of his profession, and persuades him, though not without difficulty, to forsake his rustic garb for an attire more magnificent and warlike.

The romance of Perceval is almost the only one which relates the story of a raw and inexperienced countryman's first entrance into the world, and his immediate admission into the order of knighthood. In other romances the heroes are introduced to our acquaintance in the plenitude of glory, or we follow them through their gradual initiation, while they are bred up among arms, and pass through the regular steps in their advancement to knighthood. The first pages of Perceval are also by much the most comic of the Round Table romances: in none of the other knights of Arthur do we meet with the same bluntness and *naiveté* as in the young Welshman.

After Perceval has been trained to the exercises of chivalry, and equipped in his military garb, the incidents of the romance bear a perfect resemblance to those of the other fabulous histories with which it has been classed.

Our hero having left his instructor, arrives at the castle of Beaurepaire. Soon after his entrance he finds that it is blockaded by an enemy, and in the course of the day he feels that it is reduced to extremities for want of provisions. Blanchefleur, the lady of the castle, makes up, in the best way in her power, for his bad entertainment at table, and he in return frees her from the besiegers, by overthrowing in single combat their chiefs, whom he sends prisoners to the court of Arthur,

smiling  
of the  
damsel

a fool



charging them to inform the smiling damsel that he would avenge her of the blow she had received from the seneschal.

Having raised the siege of Beaurepaire, Perceval proceeds to the residence of his uncle the King Pecheur, at whose court he sees the Sangreal and sacred lance. The wounds which this prince received in his youth had never been healed up. They would, indeed, have been cured had his nephew thought proper to ask certain questions concerning these relics, as what is the use of the Sangreal, and why does blood drop from the lance? These pertinent enquiries, however, do not suggest themselves; and by his want of curiosity he incurs, as we shall afterwards find, the displeasure of the Lady Hideous.

Leaving his unfortunate uncle unquestioned, Perceval sets out on his return to the court of Arthur, where he is preceded by many knights whom he vanquishes on his way, and sends thither as prisoners. On his arrival he takes vengeance on the seneschal Lreux, and accompanies Arthur to Carlion, where that prince holds a full court. During his stay there, he one day sees the Lady Hideous pass, who loads him with her maledictions. Her neck and hands, says the romance, were brown as iron, which was the least part of her ugliness; her eyes were blacker than a Moor's, and little as those of a mouse; she had the nose of a cat or an ape, and lips like an ox; her teeth were red, like the yolk of eggs; she was bearded like a goat, was humped before and behind, and had both legs twisted. This paragon makes her excuses to King Arthur for not tarrying at his court, as she had a long journey before her, but points out a castle where 570 knights, each with his lady, were detained in captivity.

The deliverance of these prisoners opens a vast field of enterprise, and the adventures of many knights, particularly of Guavain, the nephew of Arthur, are related at great length.

Perceval dedicated himself for five years to exploits of chivalry, and neglected all exercises of devotion. He is at length reclaimed

by meeting in a forest a procession of ten ladies and three knights, who were doing penance for past transgression, and were walking barefooted for the sake of mortification. Perceval is much edified by their conversation, and goes to confess himself to a hermit, who proves to be his uncle, the brother of King Pecheur.

From the hermitage Perceval sets out with the view of revisiting this piscatory monarch, and of propounding the proper interrogatories concerning the Sangreal. In wandering from wood to wood, he comes again to the castle of Beaurepaire, where, spite of his late conversion, he passes three days with Blanchefleur.

After having accomplished the visit to his uncle, whose wounds he at length heals up by virtue of his questions, Perceval returns to the court of Arthur. Soon after his arrival, intelligence is brought to him of his uncle's death, who, it would appear, had only thriven by his infirmities, as some persons are kept alive by their gout. Arthur and all his court set out with Perceval for the kingdom of his deceased relative, to be present at the coronation. In succeeding to his sinful predecessor, Perceval also inherited a number of sacred curiosities. Of these the chief was the Sangreal, whose wonders were manifested much to the satisfaction of Arthur and his barons: it appeared daily at the hour of repast in the hands of a damsel, who carried it three times round the table, which was immediately replenished with all the delicacies the guests could desire.

Arthur returns to his usual residence, and Perceval, soon after his accession, retires to a hermitage, taking with him the Sangreal, which provided for his sustenance till the day of his death. The moment he expired, says the romance, the Sangreal, the sacred lance, and silver trencher, were carried up to the holy heavens in presence of the attendants, and since that time have never any where been seen on earth.<sup>1</sup>

Perceval, after his death, was conveyed to the *Palais aventureux*, where he was buried by the side of King Pecheur, and this epitaph

<sup>1</sup> The Genoese, however, boasted that they were in possession of the St Graal, which they pretended to have acquired as their share of booty at the taking of Jerusalem in the beginning of the 11th

century. Jehan d'Autun informs us that the relic was exhibited to Lewis XII. when he visited Genoa in 1502. (*Croniques de Louis XII.*)



was inscribed on his tomb:—Cy-Git Perceval le Gallois, qui du Saint Greal les adventures acheva.

Many incidents of the life of Perceval are related in other romances of the Round Table, especially in *Lancelot du Lac*, where a full account, but with considerable variation, is given of the early part of his career; he is brought to the court of Arthur by an elder brother; and a lady, who had not spoken, in place of not having smiled, for ten years, fortells his future eminence, and expires on having uttered the prediction.

But the chief difference is in the circumstances connected with the acquisition of the Sangreal, the conquest of which is a leading incident in

#### LANCELOT DU LAC,

and occupies a considerable portion of that romance. Hence it has been classed among the continuations of the history of the Sangreal; but the part which relates to the acquirement of that relic, is by no means the most interesting in the work, nor that in which Lancelot himself has the greatest share. The account of the earliest years of his life is the most romantic, and his intrigue with Queen Geneura the most curious part of the composition.

King Ban of Britany was, in his old age, attacked by his enemy Claudas, a neighbouring prince, and after a long war was besieged in the strong hold of Tribble, which was the only place that now remained to him, but was considered as an impregnable fortress. Being at length reduced to extremities, he departs from this castle with his wife Helen and his infant son Lancelot, in order to beg assistance from his suzerain King Arthur, and, meanwhile, intrusts the defence of Tribble to his seneschal. While prosecuting his route he ascends a hill, from the top of which he perceives his castle on fire, for it had been treacherously surrendered by the seneschal, who in romance is generally represented as a coward or traitor. At this sight the old man is struck with despair, and instantly expires. Helen, leaving her child on the brink of a lake, flies to receive the last sighs of her husband; on returning she perceives the little

Lancelot in the arms of a nymph, who, on the approach of the queen, throws herself into the lake with the child. “Et quand la royne approcha des chevaulx, qu’ estoient dessus le lac, si voit son fils deslye hors du berceau, et une damoiselle qui le tient tout nud en son giron, et le estrainct et serre moult doucement entre ses deux mammelles, et luy baise souvent les yeulx et la bouche: car c’ estoit ung des plus beaulx enfans de tout le monde. Et lors la Royne dist a la damoiselle—Belle douce amye, pour Dieu laissez mon enfant; car assez aura desormais de dueil et de mesaise: il est cheu en trop grand poureté et misere; car il a perdu toutes joyes. Son pere est orendroit mort et sa terre perdue qui n’ estoit mye petite si Dieu la luy eust gardée. A chose que la Royne die la damoiselle ne repond ung seul mot. Et quant elle la voit approcher si se lieve a tout l’ enfant, et s’ en vient droictement au lac, et joint les pieds et se lance dedans. La Royne voyant son fils dedans le lac se pasme incontinent.”—(V. 1. F. 4. recto.) This nymph was Vivian, mistress of the enchanter Merlin, better known by name of the Lady of the Lake. Lancelot received the appellation of Lac from having been educated at the court of this enchantress, whose palace was situated in the midst, not of a real, but, like the appearance which deceives the African traveller, of an imaginary lake, whose deluding resemblance served as a barrier to her residence. Here she dwelt not alone, but in the midst of a numerous retinue, and a splendid court of knights and damsels.

The queen, after her double loss, retired to a convent, where she was joined by the widow of Bohort, for this good king had died of grief on hearing of the death of his brother Ban. His two sons Lyonel and Bohort, are rescued by a faithful knight called Farien, from the fury of Claudas. They arrive in the shape of greyhounds at the palace of the lake, where, having resumed their natural form, they are educated along with their cousin Lancelot.

When this young prince has attained the age of eighteen, the Lady of the Lake carries him to the court of Arthur, that he may be admitted to the honour of knighthood. On his first appearance he makes a strong impression on the heart of Geneura. The history of Arthur receives a singular colouring from



the amours of his queen with Lancelot. It is for her sake that the young knight lays whole cargoes of tributary crowns at the feet of her husband ; for her he accomplishes the conquest of Northumberland, where he takes the castle of Douloureuse Garde (Berwick), afterwards, under the name of Joyeuse Garde, the favourite residence and burying place of the knight. In compliment to Geneura, he attacks and defeats King Gallehaut, who becomes his chief confidant, and brings about the first stolen interview between his friend and Geneura. It is even at the suggestion of this queen that he excites Arthur and his knights to a long war of vengeance against Claudas, the usurper of his own dominions. When Arthur, deceived by the artifices of a woman, who insisted that she was the real Geneura, repudiates his queen, leaving her at liberty to indulge without restraint, her passion for Lancelot, the knight is not satisfied ; he deems it necessary for the dignity of his mistress that she should be restored to the throne of Britain, and that, protected in her reputation by the cloak of marriage and the sword of her lover, she should pass her life in reputable adultery. Hence a great proportion of his exploits are single combats, undertaken in defence of the innocence of his mistress, in which his success is usually greater than he deserved from the justice of his cause. To Geneura, too, on the most trying occasions his fidelity remains inviolate, as appears from the indignation he expresses at having been betrayed into the embraces of a damsel, who inconsiderately assumed the character of Geneura.—“Trop durement damoyselle m’avez vous mocqué ; mais vous en mourrez ; car Je ne vueil pas que jamais decevez Chevalier en telle maniere comme vous m’avez deceu. Lors dressa l’espée contremont, et la damoyselle qui grant paour avoit de mourir luy cria mercy a jointes mains, en luy disant—haa franc Chevalier ne m’occiez mye, pour celle pitié que Dieu eut de Marie Magdaleine. Si s’arresta tout pensif—si la veit la plus belle que oncques avoit veu : et il trembloit si durement d’yre et de maltalent que a peine pouoit il tenir son espee, et pensoit s’il occiroit, ou si il la laisseroit vivre. Et continuellement la damoyselle luy crioit mercy ; et estoit devant

luy, toute nue, en sa chemise, a genoulx : et luy, en regardant sa viz et sa bouche, en quoy il avoit tant de beaulté, luy dist.—Damoyselle, Je m’en yrai tout vaincu et tout recreant comme celluy qui ne s’ose de vous venger, car trop seroye cruel et desloyal si grant beaulté destruisoye.” A more convincing proof of his fidelity, however, is exhibited in his reply to a damsel who makes to him an explicit declaration of love. “Ma volonté y est si bien enracinée que Je n’auroye pas le couriage de l’en oter. Mon cueur y est nuyt et jour, car mon cueur ne mes yeux ne tendent tous jours fors celle part, ne mes oreilles ne peuvent ouyr bonnes nouvelles que d’elle. Que vous dirois—mon ame et mon corps sont tous a elle. Ainsi suis Je tout a son plaisir, ne Je ne puis rien faire de moy, non plus que le serf peult faire autre chose que son seigneur luy commande.”

Nor does Lancelot merely signalise his attachment by the preservation of his fidelity, or by engaging in those enterprises which were congenial to the feelings of a knight, but submits to disgraces which no one of his profession could endure ; thus, for the purpose of overtaking Geneura when a horse could not be procured, he ascends a cart, the greatest infamy to which a knight could be subjected : “En ce temps la estoit accoustumée que Charrette estoit si vile que nul n’estoit dedans qui tout loz et tout honneur n’eust perdu : et quant s’invouloit a aucun tollir honneur si le faisoit s’en monter en une Charrette : Car Charrette servit, en ce temps la, de ce que Pilloris servent orendroit ; ne en chascune bonne ville n’en avoit, en ce temps la, que une.”

At length the intrigue of Lancelot and Geneura is detected by the fairy Morgain, the sister of Arthur, and revealed to that prince by her and Agravain, one of the knights of the Round Table, for a vassal would have become criminal had he concealed any thing from his lord. After this detection Lancelot sustains a long war against Arthur and his knights, first in his castle of Joyeuse Garde, and afterwards in his states of Britany. Arthur is recalled from the prosecution of this contest by the usurpation of Mordrec ; and as he disappears after the battle which he fights with this unnatural son, he is believed to have been



slain with the rest of his chivalry.<sup>1</sup> Geneura, as if she thought pleasure only gratifying while criminal, withdraws to a convent. Lancelot having arrived in Britain after the battle, retires to a hermitage, and is joined in his solitude by his brother Hector of Mares, the only other knight of the Round Table who had survived the fatal battle with Mordrec.

Thus, although Lancelot du Lac is not free from the defect (common to all the Round Table romances) of a want of unity in the action, there is yet one ruling passion that animates the story. The unconnected adventures of the Duke of Clarence, as well as those of Lyonel and Boort, the two cousins of Lancelot, are, indeed, related at full length, and the conclusion of the romance is principally occupied by the quest of the Sangreal, in which Lancelot acts only a subordinate part; but as far as the hero of the work is concerned, his passion for Geneura is the ruling principle by which all his actions are guided, and the main-spring of the incidents of the romance. The adventures of the principal character, indeed, are too much of the same cast; he is too often taken prisoner, and too often rescued; and his fits of insanity are also too frequently repeated. Lancelot, however, has been perhaps the most popular of all the romances of the Round Table. On the French playing cards one of the knaves bears the name of Lancelot; a proof of the estimation in which the work was held at the time this game was invented.

There is a metrical romance on the subject of Lancelot, entitled *La Charette*, which was begun by Chretien de Troyes in the 12th century, and finished by Geoffrey de Ligny. This work is more ancient than the prose Lancelot, but, as the incidents are different, it cannot be regarded as the original of that composition. Mr Warton, and the authors of the *Bibliothèque*, seem to agree in thinking that the work, of which I have given the above abstract, was originally written in Latin; but Warton ascribes the French version to Robert de Borron, on the authority of a M.S. *Lancelot du Lac*, where it is said to be—*mis en Francois par Robert de Borron par le comandement de Henri Roi d'Angle-*

*terre*. This manuscript, however, is not the same with the printed Lancelot. In one passage of the *Bibliothèque* the composition of the prose romance of Lancelot is attributed to Gualtier Map, who is also mentioned as the French author in the preface to *Meliadus*—*Ce n'est mye de Lancelot car Maistre Gualtier Map en parla assez suffisamment en son livre*. The authors of the *Bibliothèque* have elsewhere attributed Lancelot du Lac to Gasse le Blond, a mistake which seems to have arisen from a misconception of a passage in the same preface, where it is said that he was the author of the adventures of Lancelot, meaning those connected with this hero, which are related in the romance of Tristan. Whoever may have been the author of the prose Lancelot, it is certainly of very high antiquity: indeed it is evidently older than Tristan, which is generally accounted the earliest prose romance of chivalry. No mention is made in the story of Lancelot, of the achievements of Tristan; and surely, if the work devoted to his exploits had been written first, so renowned a knight would not have been passed over in silence. The *Livre de Tristan*, on the other hand, is full of the adventures of Lancelot, many of which coincide with those related in the romance of that name. The romance of Lancelot was first printed at Paris in 1494, which is considered as the best edition: it afterwards appeared in 1513, and lastly in 1533, which impression is held in higher estimation than that by which it was immediately preceded.

In some of the editions, Lancelot is divided into three parts, the last of which is the origin of the celebrated metrical romance *Morte Arthur*. The English prose work of that name, also called the *History or Boke of Arthur*, was compiled from the romances of Lancelot, Merlin, and Tristan, by Sir Thomas Malory, in the beginning of the reign of Edward IV., and was printed by Caxton in 1485. Mr Ritson imagines that the English metrical romance of *Morte Arthur* was versified from the prose one of the same title, but as it differs essentially from Malory's prose work, and agrees exactly with the last part of the French romance of Lancelot, it is more probable that it has been versified from this composition. To Malory, Spenser was greatly in-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 10.



debted, as Warton has shown at much length in his remarks on that poet's imitations of the old romances, where he also attempts to prove that Ariosto borrowed from Lancelot du Lac the notion of Orlando's madness, of his enchanter Merlin, and of his magic cup.

The fairy Morgana, who is a principal character in this romance, and discovered to Arthur the intrigue of Geneura with Lancelot, is a leading personage not only in other tales of chivalry, but also in the Italian poems. In the *Orlando Furioso* (c. 43), she convinces her brother of the infidelity of his queen, by means of a magical horn. About a fifth part of the *Orlando Innamorato*, beginning at canto thirty-six, is occupied with the Fata Morgana. She is there represented as dispensing all the treasures of the earth, and as inhabiting a splendid residence at the bottom of a lake. Thither Orlando penetrates, and forces her to deliver up the knights she detained in captivity, by seizing her by a lock of hair, and conjuring her in the name of her master Demogorgon. She thus became a well-known character in Italy, where the appellation of Fata Morgana is given to that strange and almost incredible vision which, in certain states of the tide and weather, appears on the sea that washes the coast of Calabria. Every object at Reggio is then a thousand times reflected on a marine mirror, or, when vapours are thick, on a species of aerial skreen, elevated above the surface of the water, on which the groves and hills and towers are represented as in a moving picture. (Swinburne's *Travels*, v. i. p. 365. Houel *Voyage Pittoresque des Isles de Sicile*, &c. v. ii. p. 2.)

We have now discussed the romances which have been considered as relating more particularly to the matter of the Sangreal. The family history of the princes of Leonnoys, which is comprised in the romances of Meliadus and Tristan, who were knights of the Round Table, and contemporary with Arthur, and of their descendant Isaië le Triste, is next to be considered.

The country of Leonais, or Leonnoys, of which Meliadus was king, and which was

the birth-place of Tristan, though once contiguous to Cornwall, has now disappeared, and is said to be more than forty fathoms under water. An account of it has been fished up by Carew in his *Survey of Cornwall*, and has been quoted in the notes to Way's *Fabliaux*:—"The sea gradually encroaching on the shore hath ravined from Cornwall the whole tract of country called Lionnesse, together with divers other parcels of no little circuite; and that such a country as *Lionnesse* there was, these proofs are yet remaining. The space between the Lands-End and the isles of Scilley, being about thirteen miles, to this day retaineth that name, in Cornish Lethowsow, and carrieth continually an equal depth of 40 or 60 fathom (a thing not usual in the seas proper dominion), save that about the midway there lieth a rocke, which at low water discovereth its head. They term it the gulphe, suiting thereby the other name of Scilla. Fishermen also, casting their hooks thereabouts, have drawn up pieces of doors and windows."

Of the romances relating to the heroes of the country which has been thus overflowed, the first in the order of events, though not the earliest written, is

#### MELIADUS OF LEONNOYS,

which was printed at Paris 1528. Rusticien de Pise, the original author of this romance, commences his prologue by returning thanks to the Trinity, for having enabled him to finish the romance of Brut, and to have thus acquired the favour of King Henry of England, whom his work had so greatly pleased that he had ordered him to write another of the same sort, because his former one had not comprehended every thing relating to the subject. "In this book, therefore," says he, "will be contained whatever is wanting in Brut, and the other works extracted from the matter of the Sangreal." After this formidable declaration, in order to give an appearance of authenticity to his fables, he talks of his labour in translating from the Latin; he also dwells

<sup>1</sup> Meliadus de Leonnoys: du present volume sont contenus les nobles faicts d'armes du vaillant Roy Meliadus de Leonnoys: ensemble plusieurs autres nobles proesses de chevalerie faictes tant par le Roy Artus, Palamedes, le Morhault d'Irlande, le bon

Chevalier sans paour, Galehaut le Brun, Segurades, Galaad que autres bons chevaliers estans au temps du dit Roy Meliadus.—*Histoire singuliere et Recreative nouvellement imprimée a Paris—chez Galliot du Pre.*



with much complacency on his writings, and informs us that he had received two castles from King Henry as a reward for them. He then declines interfering with the adventures of Lancelot, as Gualtier Map had said enough of them; or of Tristan, as he himself had treated that subject in the Brut. King Henry having shown a predilection for Palamedes, who, we shall find, is a principal character in the romance of Meliadus, Rusticien wisely resolved to gratify the humour of a monarch, who remunerated the compilation of old wives' tales with a couple of castles.

This prodigal monarch must have been Henry III., for Rusticien informs us in his Gyron the Courteous, that the romance of that name was compiled from the book of his Lord Edward, when he went to the Holy Wars. It is evident this was Edward the First, who embarked for Palestine in 1270, during the life-time of his father Henry III. Now, if Rusticien compiled from a book belonging to Edward I., his existence could not have commenced in the reign of Henry II., who died in 1189, nor could it have been protracted to the accession of Henry IV., who succeeded in 1399.

The prologue of Rusticien is the only part of the composition which has reached us in its original form, and the romance of Meliadus is now only extant as corrected by a more modern author, who must nevertheless have lived at a very remote period. It is this *Redacteur*, as he is termed, who acquaints us in his preface that Rusticien de Pise was the name of his predecessor. He also informs us, that he himself laboured by order of Edward King of England; but what Edward he has left to conjecture, which has fixed on the fourth monarch of that name. He bestows much commendation on the original author, but complains bitterly of his not having been sufficiently explicit on the subject of his hero's genealogy. This deficiency it was then fortunately too late to supply, so that the romance, at least in its corrected form, begins with the adventures which happened in England to two Babylonish hostages, who had been sent by their own monarch to Rome, and had been allowed by the emperor to pass on their parole into Britain. They visited Arthur at Lramalot (Winchester), which was his chief city next to London, and his favourite

residence, on account of the fine rivers and woods by which it was surrounded. Some curious delineations are given in this part of the romance concerning the manners of the court, and form of the government of this fabulous monarch.

During the stay of the Babylonians at the court of Arthur, a romantic story occurs of a knight who arrives incognito in a vessel, and defies all the companions of the Round Table, but is severely wounded in a combat with one of their number. Arthur receives this unknown knight in his palace, and treats him with kindness, even after he discovers that the stranger is Pharamond, King of the Franks, his mortal enemy.

Being cured of his wounds, the French king embarks for his own country;—he sails down a stream, and enjoys a favourable breeze till he comes to the mouth of the river. There a storm arising, he lands and reposes himself by the side of a fountain, which was surrounded by a grove of pines, and where the grass was green and abundant. When refreshed, he sends to demand joust from Trarsin, the lord of the territory, a brave but felonious knight. This adversary he speedily overthrows; but afterwards encounters Morhault, or Morhault, of Ireland, a celebrated character in the romances of the Round Table, and by him he is in turn defeated. After the combat, these opponents, who were unknown to each other, mutually recount their adventures; and, while thus engaged, a damsel arrives to inform Morhault that her lady, who was the wife of Trarsin, and the most beautiful woman in the kingdom, expected him to an interview. This, however, was a snare laid by the husband, who had suspected his wife's fidelity, and had bribed the damsel to bring Morhault into his power. A punishment is prepared for the lovers, which seems to have suggested to Tasso the situation in which he places Olindo and Sophronia, in the 2d canto of the Jerusalem. Brehus, who afterwards received the surname of Pitiless, attempts to rescue the lovers, but in vain. After his failure in this trial, while ranging through a forest he meets Yvain, the nephew of Arthur, with a lady in his company.<sup>1</sup> Brehus kills the lady, owing to the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 11.



hatred he had conceived against the fair sex, on account of the damsel who had betrayed Morhoult. A combat ensues between Brehus and Yvain, who could not be persuaded of the justice of this retaliation. When both are nearly exhausted with fighting, the Knight without Fear arrives on the spot, and accompanied by Brehus again proceeds to attempt the rescue of Morhoult. This is at length effected, and Morhoult carries off the lady from Trarsin; but, when he has travelled a short way, he is met and vanquished by Meliadus, who restores the lady to her husband, after exacting a promise that he would use her well for the future, and cease to interrupt her gallantries.

This is the first appearance of the hero of the romance, though the preceding part occupies twenty-nine chapters of the 173, which constitute the whole work. Meliadus again vanishes, and we hear little more of him till the 43d chapter. The intervening sections are chiefly filled with the exploits of Morhoult and of the Knight Without Fear. Afterwards, however, Meliadus enters on a long series of adventures, chiefly warlike, of which the principal is the deliverance of Arthur and his companions from the castle of the rock. At the end of twenty chapters, entirely occupied with "tournaments and trophies hung," the reader is pleased, though it redounds little to the honour of the hero, to find a love story, which the author has introduced at the 65th chapter. Meliadus, in the course of his wanderings, meets with the queen of Scotland in a castle, where he was entertained, and becomes deeply enamoured of her. He returns to his own country in a languishing state of health, and imparts the story of his love to one of his knights, who undertakes to acquaint the queen with his passion, and to repeat to her a lay which his master had written, expressive of his sentiments. Meliadus afterwards prosecutes his suit personally, with the utmost success, at the court of Arthur, where his mistress then resided, till the king of Scotland being informed of the intrigue, surprises Meliadus with his queen; but promises him, —*qu' il ne feroit aucun mal a la reine pour chose qu' il eut vue*. The king considers it prudent, however, to depart from court with his consort; but on his way to Scotland he is

overtaken by Meliadus, and the queen is carried off. On account of this outrage, Arthur declares war against Meliadus. This prince, in consequence, retires to his own states, whence he describes his situation, and demands aid from Pharamond, in a poetical epistle, and is promised assistance in a similar form. A long account is given of the contest carried on in Leonnoys; Meliadus is taken prisoner, and the war concludes, in the 106th chapter, with the surrender of his capital, and re-delivery of the queen of Scotland to her husband. Meliadus amuses himself, while in confinement, with playing on the harp, and composing songs, particularly a lay, entitled, *Dueil sur Dueil*, which, the romance informs us, was the second that ever was written. He is allowed to solace himself in this manner till Arthur, being attacked by the Saxons, frees him from prison, in order to avail himself of his assistance in his contest with these enemies, which is, at length, terminated by Meliadus overthrowing Ariohan, the Saxon chief, in single combat.

In more regular works of fiction, the late appearance of the hero would, no doubt, be considered as a blemish; but in few of the ancient romances of chivalry is unity of action and interest, or any other rule of art, accurately attended to. Meliadus is destitute, however, of the principal charm of works of this nature,—a variety of enchantments, of giants, and of monsters, which are the only embellishments that can compensate for the want of regularity and breach of the laws of composition. The knights in Meliadus wander for ever amid gloomy forests, and there is more of the sombre mythology of the north, with less eastern splendour and imagination, than in almost any of the tales of chivalry.

Towards the conclusion, the romance is occupied with the exploits of the son of Meliadus, whose adventures form the subject of a separate romance, called

#### TRISTAN,<sup>1</sup>

from the name of its hero. This composition has been the most popular of all the romances

<sup>1</sup> Roman du noble et vaillant Chevalier Tristan, fils du noble Roi Meliadus de Leonnoys, compilé par Luce Chevalier, Seigneur de Chateau de Gast.



of the Round Table, and is considered as the work which best characterises the ancient spirit of French chivalry. It was first printed at Rouen, 1489, one volume folio; afterwards, in two volumes folio, at Paris, by Verard, without date, and again at the same place in 1522 and 1569. The date of its composition, however, is many centuries prior to that of its first publication.

The story of Tristan seems to have been current from the earliest times. It was the subject of a number of metrical tales in the romance language, which were versified by the French minstrels from ancient British authorities. From these original documents, or from the French metrical tales, was compiled the *Sir Tristrem*, attributed to Thomas of Erceldoune, and which has been edited by Mr Scott. There are also extant two fragments of metrical versions, which are supposed to be parts of one whole work, written by Raoul de Beauvais, who lived in the middle of the 13th century. But the immediate original of the prose Tristan is understood to be the history of Mark and Yseult, written in verse by Chrestien de Troyes, who flourished early in the 12th century. The MSS. of this work have not reached us, and the prose composition of which it is the original is of a date long posterior. Mr Scott believes that the author of the prose Tristan is the same with the earliest writer of *Meliadus*, who was certainly Rusticien de Pise, and who lived in the reign of Henry III. The author of Tristan, however, informs us at the beginning of the romance, that his name is Luce Sieur de Gast: "I, Luce Seigneur de Gast have compiled the authentic history of Tristan; who, next to Lancelot and Galaad, was the most renowned knight of the Round Table." Mr Warton attributes it to the same author, on the authority of a title-page, in a MS. copy of the romance—*Le Roman de Tristan et Iseult traduit de Latin en Francois, par Lucas Chevalier du Gast, pres de Sarisberi, Anglois*. In the preface to *Meliadus*, we are informed that it was begun by this Lucas de Gast, or Lucas de Iau, as he is there called, the first who extracted from the matter of the St Greal; that Gasse le Blond next wrote the part which relates to Lancelot, after which the story was concluded by Robert and Helias de Borron.

"Aussi Lucs de Iau translata, en langue Francoise, une partie de l'Hystoire de Monseigneur Tristan, et moins assez que il ne deust. Moult commenca bien son livre, et si ny mist tous les faicts de Tristan, ains la greigneur partie. Apres s'en entremist Messire Gasse le Blanc qui estoit parent au Roy Henri, et devisa l'Hystoire de Lancelot du Lac, et d'autre chose ne parla il mye grandement en son livre. Messire Robert de Borron s'en entremist, et Helye de Borron par la priere du dit Robert de Borron; et pour ce que compaignons feusmes d'armes longuement Je commencay mon livre," &c. It was formerly shown that Rusticien de Pise, by whom this preface to *Meliadus* was written, lived in the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I., since he talks of the expedition of the latter to the Holy Land. Now, since Rusticien mentions Robert and Helye de Borron, by whom Tristan was completed, as his contemporaries, that celebrated romance could not have been finished before the reign of Henry III. Indeed, in the MS. of Helye de Borron's portion of the work, entitled *La Mort de Tristan*, it is said to have been written at the desire of Henry the Third.

The early part of the prose romance of Tristan is occupied with an account of the ancestors of the hero, and many generations pass successively in review before the birth of *Meliadus*. This prince was married to Isabella, sister of Marc, king of Cornwall;—a fairy fell in love with him, and drew him away by enchantment, while he was engaged in the exercise of hunting. His queen set out in quest of him, but was seized with the pains of child-birth during her journey, and expired soon after being delivered of a son, whom, from the melancholy circumstances of his birth, she called Tristan before her death.

Gouvernail, the queen's squire, who had accompanied her, took charge of the child, and restored him to his father, who at length burst the enchantment of the fairy, and returned to his capital.

A dwarf having foreshown to Marc, the uncle of Tristan, that he would be dethroned by means of his nephew, this monarch vowed the death of Tristan. The emissaries he employed surprised and slew *Meliadus* during a chase, but Gouvernail saved his son, and conveyed him to the court of Pharamond.



As the young prince grew up, Belinda, the daughter of this French monarch, became enamoured of him; but, her passion being discovered by her father, Tristan found it necessary to leave the court.

A reconciliation was now effected between Tristan and his uncle Marc, who, at this time, resided at the castle of Tintagel, rendered famous by the amour of Uter and Yguerne. In this court, Tristan became expert in all the exercises incumbent on a knight. Nor was it long till he had an opportunity of practically exhibiting his valour and skill. The celebrated Morhoul, brother to the queen of Ireland, arrived to demand tribute from Marc. Tristan encountered this champion, who was forced to fly and embark, bearing with him a mortal wound. This was the first, and perhaps the most glorious, of the exploits of Tristan; but the lance of Morhoul had been poisoned, and a wound his opponent had received grew daily more envenomed. He departed from Cornwall, with the view of finding in a foreign country the relief which could not be obtained in his own. A breeze of fifteen days continuance conveyed him to the coast of Ireland. He was ignorant to what shore he had been carried, for he seems to have steered at random: he disembarked, however, on this unknown country, tuned his harp, and began to play. It was a summer evening, and the king of Ireland and his daughter, the beautiful Yseult, were at a window which overlooked the sea. The strange harper was conveyed to the palace, and his wounds were cured by Yseult. But after his recovery he was found out, from the circumstance of wearing the sword of Morhoul, to be the person who had killed that knight, and was in consequence obliged to quit the country.

On his return to Cornwall, Tristan fell in love with the wife of Segurades, a Cornish nobleman, and followed her into the dominions of Arthur, whither she had been carried by Bliomberis. While in England he defeated a knight called Blaamor, who had accused the king of Ireland of treason, before the court of Arthur. The king being thus acquitted of the charge, Tristan, at his request, accompanied him to Ireland, where he finally yielded to the solicitations of his

champion, and promised to bestow his daughter Yseult in marriage on the king of Cornwall. The mother of Yseult gave to her daughter's confidant, Brangian, an amorous potion, to be administered on the night of her nuptials. Of this beverage, Tristan and Yseult, during their voyage to Cornwall, unfortunately partook. Its effects were quick and powerful: nor was its influence less permanent than sudden; but, during the remainder of their lives, regulated the affections and destiny of the lovers. A medical potion, producing a temporary love, or rather passion, is said to have been frequently composed; but the power of the beverage quaffed by Tristan and Yseult was not believed to be confined to its immediate effects, nor to derive its power from stimulating ingredients, but was supposed to continue its influence by the force of magic, through the lives of those who shared in the draught. Nor was the belief in such philtres the offspring of the middle ages: rules for their composition are to be found in every author who treats of drugs, from Pliny's Natural History, to the works of the 17th century.

In the course of a delightful, though unprosperous voyage, Tristan and Yseult arrive on an unknown island, where they are detained as prisoners, along with a number of knights and damsels, who had previously landed. But the uncourteous customs of this castle being destined to end, when it should be visited by the bravest knight and fairest woman in the world, Tristan is enabled, by overcoming a giant, to effect the deliverance of the captives, after which he becomes the friend of Gallehault, the lord of the manor.

After the arrival of Tristan and Yseult in Cornwall, and the nuptials of the latter with King Marc, an uneasiness arises lest the husband should discover the imperfections of his bride. Brangian, the confidant of Yseult, who had never yielded to the weakness which occasioned the embarrassment of her mistress, agrees, by a deception frequently practised in the romances of chivalry, to occupy her place for a single night. Marc being thus guarded from suspicion, the provident Yseult, to escape the possibility of detection, delivers her late substitute to two ruffians, with orders to murder her in a wood. The assassins, having



somewhat more mercy than their fair employer, leave their commission unexecuted, and only tie her to a tree, from which she is soon relieved by Palamedes.

After this, a great part of the romance is occupied with the contrivances of Tristan, and the tender Yseult, to procure secret interviews, which are greatly furthered by Dinas, Marc's seneschal.

Tristan, at a time when he was forced to leave Cornwall, on account of the displeasure of his uncle, was wounded one day while sleeping in a forest, with a poisoned arrow, by the son of a person he had killed. The ladies of those days, and particularly Yseult, were very skilful leeches; but to return to Cornwall in the present circumstances was impossible. He was, therefore, advised to repair to Britany, where Yseult with the White Hands was as celebrated for her surgical operations, as Yseult of Cornwall. Tristan was cured by this new Yseult, and married her, more out of gratitude than love, if we may judge from his apathy after the nuptials.<sup>1</sup> He employed himself solely in building a vessel in which he might sail to Cornwall, and at length embarked on receiving a message from the queen of that country; but was driven by a tempest on the coast of England, near the forest of Darnant, where he delivered King Arthur from the power of the Lady of the Lake. Having experienced a number of adventures he reached Cornwall, accompanied by Pheredin, his wife's brother, whom he had made the confidant of his passion, and who had followed him through the whole course of this expedition. These friends had no sooner arrived in Cornwall, than Pheredin became enamoured of the queen. Tristan was seized with a fit of jealousy, retired to a forest, and went mad. After many acts of extravagance and folly, he allowed himself to be conducted to court, where he was soon restored to reason by the attention of Yseult. But, on his recovery, the jealousy of Marc revived, and he was compelled to take a solemn oath that he would leave Cornwall for ever.

Our hero proceeded to the dominions of Arthur, which again became the theatre of

unnumbered exploits. The jealousy of Marc, however, was not extinguished by the absence of Tristan; he set out for England with a view of treacherously killing his nephew, and in his progress through the kingdom made himself ridiculous by that cowardice for which most of the knights of Cornwall were notorious. At the court of Arthur he became the laughing-stock of all the knights, by flying before Daguenet, the king's fool, whom he mistook for Lancelot du Lac. While there, however, Arthur effected a reconciliation between him and his nephew, and after their return to Cornwall, Tristan delivered that kingdom from the invasion of the Saxons, by whom it had been brought to the verge of ruin. Marc, however, behaved with signal ingratitude, for his suspicions being again awakened, he threw Tristan into prison. He was freed by an insurrection of the people of Cornwall, and in turn shut up Marc in the same prison in which he had been himself confined. Tristan took this opportunity of eloping with the queen of Cornwall, to the dominions of Arthur, where he resided at Joyeuse Garde, the favourite castle of Lancelot, and which that knight assigned the lovers as their abode, till Arthur again reconciled all parties. Marc was then delivered from prison, and restored to the enjoyment of his rebellious kingdom and his fugitive spouse.

Tristan, subsequent to these events, returned to Britany and to his long-neglected wife. Soon after his arrival, information was brought that the Count of Nantes had thrown off his allegiance to Runalen, brother of the white-handed Yseult, who had lately succeeded his father in the duchy of Britany. Tristan defeated the rebels, but while mounting a tower by a scaling ladder, he was struck to the ground by a stone thrown from the garrison, and severely wounded.

It was during the attendance of Yseult on Tristan, that she first became his wife in the tenderest acceptation of the term. The Count de Tressan, in his extract, has represented this late fulfilment of his obligations, as the primary cause of the death of Tristan; but, in reality, he recovered from his wound and its consequences, and forgot Yseult of Britany, and the white hands, who was now doubly

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 12.



his own, in the arms of Yseult of Cornwall. He had obtained admission to the palace of Marc in the disguise of a fool, and had many secret interviews with the queen; but, being at length discovered, he was forced to return to Britany.

Runalen, the brother-in-law of Tristan, was at this time engaged in an intrigue; our hero had assisted him in forging false keys to enter the castle of the knight, with whose lady he was enamoured, and even consented to accompany him to a rendezvous which his mistress had appointed. Tristan had already retired, when the husband unexpectedly returned from the chase: Runalen and Tristan escaped in the first instance, but were pursued and overtaken by the husband and his people; Runalen was killed, and Tristan received a wound from a poisoned weapon. Of the physicians who attended him, an obscure doctor from Salerno,<sup>1</sup> was the only one who understood his case; but the other physicians insisted on his dismissal, and Tristan was soon reduced by their remedies to the lowest ebb. In this situation, as a last resource, he despatched a confidant to the queen of Cornwall, who was so celebrated for her surgical skill, to try if he could induce her to accompany him to Britany. Should his endeavours prove successful, he was ordered to display, while on his return, a white sail, and a black one if his persuasions were fruitless:—an idea which every one will trace to a classic and mythological origin. The messenger arrived in Cornwall in the character of a merchant; in this disguise he had an early opportunity of seeing the queen, and persuaded her, in the absence of Marc, to return with him to Britany.

Meanwhile Tristan awaited the arrival of the queen with such impatience, that he employed one of his wife's damsels to watch at the harbour, and report to him when the black or white sail should appear over the wave. Yseult, who was not in the secret, demanded the reason of this perpetual excubation, and was, for the first time, informed that Tristan had sent for the queen of Corn-

wall. It was but lately that this white-handed bride had learned the full value of a husband, and the jealousy to which she had hitherto been a stranger took possession of her soul.

Now the vessel which bore the queen of Cornwall is wafted towards the harbour by a favourable breeze, all its white sails unfurled. Yseult, who was watching on the shore, flew to her husband, and reported that the sails were black. Tristan, penetrated with inexpressible grief, exclaimed, "*Haa douce amye a Dieu vous command—Jamais ne me veerez, ne moy vous: A Dieu je vous salue. Lors bat sa coulpe, et se commande a Dieu, et le cuer luy creve, et l'ame s'en va.*"

The account of the death of Tristan was the first intelligence which the queen of Cornwall heard on landing. She was conducted almost senseless into the chamber of Tristan, and expired holding him in her arms;—"lors l'embrasse de ses bras tant comme elle peut, et gette ung souspir, et se pasme sur le corps; et le cuer lui part, et l'ame s'en va."

Tristan, before his death, had requested that his body should be sent to Cornwall, and that his sword, with a letter he had written, should be delivered to King Marc. The remains of Tristan and Yseult were embarked in a vessel, along with the sword, which was presented to the king of Cornwall. He was melted with tenderness when he saw the weapon which slew Morhault of Ireland, which so often saved his life, and redeemed the honour of his kingdom. In the letter Tristan begged pardon of his uncle, and related the story of the amorous potion.

Marc ordered the lovers to be buried in his own chapel. From the tomb of Tristan there sprung a plant, which went along the walls, and descended into the grave of the queen. By order of Marc it was cut down three times, but every morning the obdurate vegetable sprung up more verdant than before, and this miracle has ever since shaded the tombs of Tristan and Yseult.

Such plants are common in the old ballads.

<sup>1</sup> In the middle ages, a number of quack-doctors, mostly Italians, were educated at the Jewish university of Salerno. They commonly undertook the

tour of Europe, after they left college, accompanied by a punch or merryman, paying their way by the fees received for their advice.



The Scotch ballad, Lord Thomas and Fair Annet, concludes,

“Lord Thomas was buried without kirk wa’,  
Fair Annet within the quiere ;  
And o’ the tane thair grew a birk,  
The other a bonny briere,  
And ay they grew, and ay they threw,  
As they would fain be near.”—*Percy’s Relics*.

Similar verses, but with some verbal alterations, conclude Prince Robert, published in the *Minstrelsy of the Border* ; and we have plants possessed of the same powers of sympathy and vegetation in the wild romantic ballad of the Douglas Tragedy.

The fabulous history of Tristan has generally been considered as the most beautiful of the romances of the Round Table. “The character of Palamedes (says Mr Scott) the despairing adorer of Yseult, is admirably contrasted with that of Tristan, his successful rival. Nor is there a truer picture of the human mind, than the struggles between the hatred of rivalry, and the chivalrous dictates of knightly generosity, which alternately sway both the warriors. The character of Dinadan, brave and gallant, but weak in person and unfortunate in his undertakings, yet supporting his mischances with admirable humour, and often contriving a witty and well-managed retort on his persecutors, is imagined with considerable art. The friendship of Tristan and Lancelot, and of their two mistresses, with a thousand details which display great knowledge of human nature, render Tristan interesting in the present day, in spite of those eternal combats, to which, perhaps, the work owed its original popularity. The character of King Marc is singular and specific ; it is well brought out from the canvass, and a similar one is not to be met with in other romances of chivalry. In the early metrical tales, he is merely represented as weak and uxorious. The darker shades of character have been added in the prose romance, to excuse the frailty of Yseult.” I am not certain if the idea of the amorous potion, which is Yseult’s great apology, and forms the ground-work of the romance, be

well conceived ; for, if in one respect it palliates the conduct of the lovers, it diminishes our admiration of their fidelity. The character of the queen of Cornwall can hardly excite love or compassion, as the savage atrocity of her conduct to Brangian starts up every moment in the recollection of the reader. The pitiful malice of the white-handed Yseult, who, to serve no end, brings a false report to her husband in his last moments, renders her as contemptible as the heroine is hateful, and the dishonourable manner in which Tristan comes by his death, diminishes the pity we might otherwise feel for his fate.

Whatever may be its beauties or defects, the romance was well known, and popular in all the countries of Europe ; it was repeatedly printed in France in its original form, and modernized into the language of that country by Jean Maugin dit le petit Angevin, 1554, under the title of *Le Nouveau Tristan*.

A translation of *Tristan* was printed in Spanish, at Seville, 1528 ; and a romance, somewhat different in the adventures it contains, was published in 1552, in Italian, entitled *I-due Tristani*.<sup>1</sup>

Nor has any romance of the Round Table furnished such ample materials of imitation, to the Italian novelists and poets. The story of the Greyhounds, a favourite dog in the middle ages, which has been successively copied by the queen of Navarre and Bonaventure des Perriers, may be found in *Tristan*. There Dinas, King Marc’s seneschal, pursued his wife, who had been carried off by a knight, and had taken her husband’s greyhounds along with her ; the seneschal overtakes the fugitives, and, trusting to the affection of his wife, agrees that she should be left to her own choice. The lady follows the knight, but the lovers instantly return and demand the greyhounds, concerning which a similar agreement is made ; but they, more faithful than the lady, and deaf to the voice of a stranger, remain with their old master. The same story is told in the *Fabliau of the Chevalier a l’ Epée* : and is related of Gauvain in the metrical

<sup>1</sup> This romance coincides in its circumstances with a very scarce Italian poem, by Nicolo Agostini, the continuator of Boiardo, printed at Venice in 1520, entitled *Il secondo e terzo libro de Tristano*, nel

quale si tracta come re Marco di Cornouaglia trovandolo un giorno con Isotta l’ uccise a tradimento, e come la ditta Isotta vedendolo morto di dolore morì sopra il suo corpo.



romance of Perceval, but has not been introduced into the prose one of that name. It is also in the printed Lancelot, but not in the most ancient MS. of that romance.

I will not say that the phrensy of Orlando has been imitated from that of Tristan; but in some circumstances they have a striking resemblance. Jealousy was the cause of both, and the paroxysms are similar. Ariosto, however, though perhaps through the medium of his predecessor Boiardo, is indebted to this romance for the notion of the fountains of love and hatred, which occasion such vicissitudes in the loves of Rinaldo and Angelica. Tristan also makes a conspicuous figure in the 32d canto of the Orlando Furioso, where a story is related concerning Tristano, which is borrowed from this romance. Bradamante, overtaken by night, is directed to a building which still retained the name of the Tower of Tristan. In this retreat, Clodion, the son of Pharamond, had confined a beauty of whom he was jealous. Tristan had arrived there at eve, and, being at first refused admission, had procured it by force of arms. After this the usage was established, that a knight should only obtain entrance if he overcame those knights who had found reception before his arrival, and the lady, if she surpassed in charms the females by whom the castle was already occupied. From the romance of Tristan, Ariosto has also borrowed the story of the enchanted horn, by which the husband discovers the infidelity of his wife, by *his own* way of drinking, and which is said to have been originally given by Morgana to convince Arthur of the infidelity of Geneura:—

Qual gia per fare accorto il suo fratello  
Del fallo di Gineura fe Morgana;  
Chi la Moglie ha pudica bee con quello,  
Ma non vi può gia ber chi l' ha puttana,  
Che l' vin quando lo crede in bocca porre  
Tutto si sparge, e fuor nel petto scorre.—(C. 43.)

In Tristan, however, the discovery is made by the *Culprit's* mode of drinking. In that romance, during one of King Marc's fits of jealousy, a knight, who was an enemy of Tristan, brings a lady to court who possesses an enchanted horn, which was so framed that those wives, who had been unfaithful to their husbands, spilled the liquor with which it was filled, in attempting to drink from it.

They all perform so awkwardly, that Marc, in the first heat of his resentment, orders a bon-fire to be prepared for the general reception of the ladies of the court. This horn is also introduced in Perceval, but there the experiment is also tried on the knights. A similar trial is made on the ladies at the court of Arthur in the English Morte Arthur. The fiction, however, may be traced higher than the romance of Tristan. Le Grand thinks that it has been imitated from the Short Mantle in one of the Fabliaux he has published, which was too short or too long for those ladies who had been false to their husbands or lovers. This story was originally called in the Fabliaux, Le Court Mantel, but was translated into prose in the 16th century under the name of Le Manteau mal taillé. There is, however, a Breton lay, entitled Lai du Corn, which bears a nearer resemblance to the story in Tristan. A magical horn is brought by a boy during a sumptuous feast given by Arthur, which in a similar mode, disclosed the same secrets as that in Tristan. The stories of the Mantle and the Horn have been united in an English ballad of the reign of Henry VI., published by Percy, entitled The Boy and the Mantle, where the cup is the test of a dishonoured husband, and the mantle of a faithless woman. Some mode of trial on this point is common in subsequent romances and poems. In Perceforest it is a rose; in Amadis de Gaul a garland of flowers, which blooms on the head of her that is faithful, and fades on the brow of the inconstant. The reader of Spenser is well acquainted with the girdle of Florimel. B. 4. l. 5. s. 3.

Some experiment for ascertaining the fidelity of women in defect of evidence, seems, in reality, to have been resorted to from the earliest ages. By the Levitical law (Numbers, c. v. 11-31), there was prescribed a proof of chastity, which consisted in the suspected person drinking water in the tabernacle. The mythological fable of the trial by the Stygian fountain, which disgraced the guilty by the waters rising so as to cover the laurel wreath of the unchaste female who dared the examination, probably had its origin in some of the early institutions of Greece or Egypt. Hence the notion was adopted in the Greek romances,



the heroines of which, we have seen, were invariably subjected to a magical test of this nature, which is one of the few particulars wherein any similarity of incident can be traced between the Greek novels and the romances of chivalry: the Grecian heroines, however, underwent the experiment in a cave, or some retirement, though they might have exhibited with credit openly, while the ladies of chivalry are always exposed in public—in a full court or crowded assembly; the former, too, are only subjected to a trial of virginity, the latter more frequently to some proof of conjugal fidelity.

We have been long detained with Tristan and Yseult; it is now time that we proceed to the romance of

#### YSAIE LE TRISTE,<sup>1</sup>

in which is related the history of their son, who was the fruit of the interviews procured for these lovers by the accommodating Dinas.

When Tristan departed for the court of Arthur, the queen was obliged to ask permission to make a distant pilgrimage. The necessity of this request conveys a most cruel, and, if we believe other romances, a most unfounded insinuation against King Marc. Yseult had proceeded no farther in her journey than the skirts of the forest of Mouris, when she gave birth to a son. She sent for a hermit who resided in the vicinity, but who, spite of the urgency of the occasion, refused to baptize the child till the mother had revealed her foibles, and thus paid the tribute which, in those days, conscience owed to religion. He then baptized the infant by submersion in a neighbouring fountain, and called him Ysaie le Triste; an appellation compounded of the names of his parents. After this the queen returned to her husband, and the recluse carried the little Ysaie along with him to his hermitage.

One clear moonlight evening when the hermit had retired to his devotions, and was kneeling before the altar, his attention was distracted by the sound of delightful and unearthly music, which he heard at a distance

in the forest, and which gradually approached his solitary dwelling. Looking through a window which opened from this oratory into his cell, he perceived a group of fairies, who made free to light a comfortable fire, and, having warmed themselves and washed the child, departed to the same tune to which they had entered.

At this visit the hermit felt considerable inquietude, for the fairies were not Christians; but the benevolence with which they had treated the child, and their liberality in leaving a plentiful supply of provisions, induced him to consider them as such. Some nights after, his new guests returned, and introduced themselves in due form, one as the Vigorous Fairy, another as the Courageous Fairy, &c. They announced that they frequently resorted to the bush which confined the magician Merlin, with whom they had lately enjoyed a full conversation on the merits of different knights, and other important affairs of chivalry. In particular, Merlin had mentioned the death of Tristan, and recommended his child to their best attentions: accordingly they now endued Ysaie with the gifts which each had the power of bestowing, one giving him strength, another courage, and so forth. They also directed the hermit to proceed with his ward, as soon as he passed the period of infancy, through the Green Forest; and then, on hearing the cock crow, they suddenly vanished.

After some years had elapsed, the hermit set out with Ysaie, according to the route which been prescribed to him by the fairies. Having passed through the Green Forest, they came to a plain, in the midst of which stood a fountain, and from the middle of the fountain grew a tree, which shaded it with spreading branches. Around sat the protecting fairies, who now bestowed on Ysaie, as an attendant, an ill-favoured dwarf, called Tronc, whose personal deformity was compensated by the quickness of his understanding.

Having left the fairies, chance conducted our adventurers to the tomb of the enchanter Merlin, whence deep groans were heard to issue: Tronc interrogated the voice of the

<sup>1</sup> Le Roman du vaillant Chevalier Ysaie le Triste, fils de Tristan de Leonnoys Chevalier de la Table Ronde, et de la princesse Yseult Royne de Cornou-

aille; avec les nobles prouesses de Marc l'Exille fils du dit Ysaie, reduit du vieil langage Francois.



magician, which informed them of the overthrow of Arthur with his chivalry, and directed his audience to proceed to the hermitage of Lancelot du Lac, who having alone survived the fatal battle with Mordrec, was now the only person worthy to invest Ysaie with the order of knighthood, and to bestow a new Tristan on the world. In obedience to the exhortation of Merlin, they proceeded to the retreat of Lancelot; but found on their arrival that it was no longer inhabited, as the knight had met in repose the death which had so often spared him in battle. By advice of the dwarf Tronc, they repaired to the tomb of Lancelot, where a mausoleum of noble simplicity rose in view. The marble which covered the body of the warrior was raised, and the hermit dubbed Ysaie a knight with the right arm of the skeleton, accompanying this ghastly inauguration with a harangue, which seems to form a compendium of the duties of knighthood:—"Chevalier, soies cruel a tes ennemys, debonnaire a tes amys, humble a non puissans, et aidez toujours le droit a soustenir, et confons celluy qui tort a Vefves dames pources pucelles et orphelins; et pources gens aymes toujours a ton pouoir, et avec ce aime toujours Sainte Eglise."

Ysaie returned to the hermitage, but the recluse having died after a time, he set out in quest of adventures, in all which the stratagems and ingenuity of Tronc were of great service to his master. The state of the country at this period gave ample scope for chivalrous exploits. After the death of Arthur, a number of petty sovereignties had been erected, and were maintained by cruelty and oppression. Ysaie, however, abolished the evil customs which had been established at different castles, and in their place substituted others more consonant to the genuine spirit of chivalry.

By these means the fame of Ysaie reached the court of King Irion. It is not said where this monarch reigned, but he had a beautiful niece, called Martha. This princess had a strong prepossession in favour of knights, as her nurse had persuaded her that the bravest heroes were the most tender lovers. She resolved to be beloved by Ysaie, and immediately wrote to him on the subject. Our hero returned a favourable answer, but his speed not keeping pace with her wishes, she pre-

vailed on her uncle to proclaim a tournament, in the hope that he would repair to the exhibition. On the eve of its celebration, while Irion was dining in his hall with four hundred knights and an equal number of ladies, and while the second course (second metz) was serving, the pleasure of the repast was suddenly interrupted by the arrival of Tronc, whom his master had sent on before, and who entered, to the utter amazement and consternation of the assembly, *Car trop estoit hideux a merveilles*. Having discovered Martha seated between two knights, who were clothed in black and purple, he delivered her a letter from Ysaie announcing his speedy approach.

Ysaie arrived during supper at the palace of the king, where he knocked out the brains of the porter who refused him admittance. On ascending the stairs he discovered Martha, by whom he was received as he had reason to expect. Their interview was interrupted by the approach of the king; but the host, with whom Ysaie had taken up his quarters, came soon after to inform the princess that her knight had proceeded no farther than the first house in the suburbs. In consequence of this intimation she repaired in the evening to the rendezvous, where she gave her lover the most decisive proofs of her benevolence.

On the following day Ysaie, who was arrayed in white armour, distinguished himself at the tournaments; but during the entertainment by which they were succeeded, a defiance was brought from the giant, styling himself Lord of the Black Forest, addressed to Ysaie in his character of reformer of abuses, and declaring that he the giant meant to persevere in the practice which he had hitherto observed, of delivering all ladies whom he caught within his jurisdiction to his grooms (*varlets de chevaulx*), and afterwards throwing them into the ditch surrounding his castle, which, as the romancer very justly remarks, "*Estoit la plus laide coustume du monde.*"

Our hero proceeded to destroy this monster, and on the road conversed with Tronc on his late happiness; who, it would appear, had little cause to rejoice at the amorous success of his master:—"Ja en suis Je," says he, "moulu et déchiré. Les Feés, vos amies et protectrices, m'ont fait chierement payer vos plaisirs; ores dansiez vous aux nopces et



payois Je les violons ; et disoient elles que en ma chair devois Je ressentir le tort que avoit la votre."

While Ysaie was engaged in discomfiting the giant, and in making converts by force of arms to the true faith, the Princess Martha had felt the consequences of a frank letter and an imprudent rendezvous. King Irion pardoned her transgression, and indeed swore "Par Saincte croix si c'est du chevalier au blanc escu Je ne fus oncques si joyeux." But, however much gratified by hearing that it was the white-shielded knight, he could not help expressing his astonishment that Ysaie, having passed only twenty-four hours in his territories, should have employed them in knocking down his porter and seducing his niece.

Martha having given birth to a son, who was called Marc, adopted, though somewhat late, the intention of uniting herself in marriage to Ysaie. With this view she set out in quest of him, disguised as a minstrel, and wandered from tower to tower singing lays expressive of her pain and her passion:—"Lors tire la harpe et la trempe, et puis commence a harper si melodieusement que c'estoit merveilles a ouyr. Et puis chantoit avec ce tant bien que le palays en retentissoit." On one occasion she poured forth her melody at the gates of the castle of Argus, where Ysaie happened at that time to reside. Unfortunately she was recognised by Tronc, who, still mindful of the chastisement of the fairies, informed her, after having disguised himself, that Ysaie had gone to the next town, and that she would easily overtake him.

While Martha thus wastes her steps and her music, her son Marc passed the period of infancy:—"Et bien saichez que c'estoit le pyre de son aage que oncques fust veu. Si vous diray en quelle maniere ; de prime face quant le Roy mengeoit il venoit a la table et espandoit le vin et tiroit la nappe et les hanaps a luy et boutoit tout a terre : Et puis venoit en la cuisine et respandoit les pots. Aux petis enfans faisait il tant de hont que c'estoit merveilles. Le roy avoit avec luy ung sien nepveu fils de son frere : une heure regardoit en la court dedans ung puis ; Marc le leva par les piez et le bouta dedans, et fut noyé. Quant le Roy Irion le sceut si en fust moult courroucé." It was no wonder then that the

knight "qui l'endoctrinoit," complained to the king, "que c'est la plus cruelle piece de chair qui oncques nasquit de mere. Et vous ditz, que se tantost ne fais oyé ce que il dist il meteroit hors par les fenestres de la tour : Et sachez que au jour de l'escremie il a tué vostre Boutillier et ung des maistres d'hostel. Mon Dieu, fait le Roy Irion, J'estoye tout esbahy que Je ne les veoye plus aller ne venir." The king on receiving this account sends for his nephew, and instead of reprimanding him, "*Beau nepveu, fait le roy, Je suis desormais ancien homme et tout maladif, et vous etes fort, et puissant et saige ; se vous voulez, si vouldroyé que par le conseil des saiges que gouvernissiez mon royaume en contester contre tous ceux qui mal vouldroyent faire.*"

The first exercise of power on the part of this wise young prince was to proclaim a tournament, during which he displayed more courage than courtesy. The knights and courtiers of King Irion, being jealous of the authority of a prince whose recommendation to sovereign power seems to have consisted in his dexterity in throwing children into wells, and beating out the brains of butlers, entered into a conspiracy against him, of which the plot is so singular, and so similar to the stories of haunted apartments in modern romance, that I have thought it deserving of a place in the Appendix.<sup>1</sup>

After Marc had triumphed over all the machinations of his enemies, intelligence arrived that the Amiral of Persia had just landed in Britain, accompanied by his nephew, the King of Nubia, surnamed the Red Lion ; as also by the kings of Castille, Seville, and Aragon, who had all sworn by Mahomet and Ter-vagant that they would not return to their own country till they had extirpated Christianity.

It would appear that the Saracen commander had divided his army into two portions. A few troops proceeded against the capital of Irion, but the main body, under the orders of the amiral in person, remained near the coast on which they had disembarked. Marc advanced against the latter division, which, with the assistance of a few peasants, he totally defeated. After the engagement he found the beautiful Orimonda, daughter of

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 13.



the amiral, reposing in the pavilion of her father. He conducts this princess as a trophy to his tents, sups with her, baptizes her, and promises to espouse her on his return to the court of King Irion, but meanwhile prevails on her to invert the usual ceremonies which constitute a legal marriage :—

Il n'est rien de si doux pour descoeurs pleins de gloire,

Que la paisible nuit qui suit une victoire ;

Dormir sur un trophée est un charmant repos,

Et le champ de bataille est le lit d'un heros.

ALARIC.

Next morning the son of Ysaie set out in pursuit of the remaining Saracen army, but his father had been before hand with him. Ysaie had proceeded with great rapidity in the work of conversion ; but as he had nearly extirpated the native infidels, he was much delighted with this fresh supply, which he had accordingly attacked and defeated under the walls of the capital of King Irion. The father and son, equally victorious, met and recognised each other on the field of battle, where Orimonda was presented by Marc to his father. A moment of yet greater transport was reserved. Tronc being now associated to Marc in the adventures he undertook, it was partly by his means that Martha was delivered from traitors, who were leading her to death, and finally restored to the arms of Ysaie.

The posterity of Tristan were thus happy and united. The nuptials of the father and son were celebrated, and the son was knighted by the father. During the festival that ensued, the protecting fairies again appeared. To the faithful Tronc a recompence was still wanting. They informed him that he had the good fortune to belong to their family, being the son of Julius Cæsar by their eldest sister the Fairy Morgana. Strange events, which are written in the Chronicles of Fairies, had forced him to endure a long and severe penance. His aunts the fairies, in order to enable him to pass the time more agreeably, had transformed him into a hideous dwarf, and linked him to the fate of their *protégé*. But the period of disgrace was at length expired. The fairies cleansed him from his deformities, and he now appeared the handsomest prince in the world, as he had formerly been the most witty and ingenious. The smallness of his stature, which

did not exceed three feet, was the only imperfection that remained. His aunts bestowed on him a kingdom, and in this new form and dignity he was known by the title of Aubron, under which denomination he performed many wonders, related in the beautiful romance of Huon of Bourdeaux. Before departing for the Vergier des Fees, where he was about to establish his empire, he left with Ysaie a magic horn, which is the origin of that in Huon :—  
“ Or quant Tronc fut baptizé se dist a Ysaie—tenez ce cor sur vous et le portez ; si vous avez besoing vous ou Marc si le sonnez, mais gardez vous bien que point ne le sonnez si ce n'est pour grant besoing, et Je vous viendray aider et secourir.”

The romance of Ysaie derives its chief excellence from the singular character of Tronc—his attachment, wit, and endless resources. His fidelity is the same to Ysaie and Marc, whose behaviour to him is singularly contrasted ; by the former, who is a more polished warrior, he is invariably treated with tenderness and respect ; while he is often driven from the presence of his impetuous son, and reminded that he is “ trop défiguré, trop hideux a veoir, et plus laide creature du monde.”

Ysaie le Triste has also received much novelty from Tronc's relatives the fairies, as it is the first tale of chivalry in which they are introduced acting a decided part. This new species of machinery has given rise to gorgeous descriptions, and pictures of magnificence, hitherto unknown. The representation of the Vergier des Fees, which Tronc and Ysaie visit in the course of their adventures, is perhaps the richest and most splendid in romance.—“ Et ainsi qu'ils parloient voyt Marc une grande valee, et au fons du val avoient tant d'arbres que merveilles ; et y chantoient oyseaulx tant doucement que c'estoit plaisir a ouyr. Et Marc s'arresta ung petit, si entend chanssons de damoysselles chantans tant doucement que tout esbahy en estoit, car oncques tels choses ouy n'avoit ; et avec ce s'accordoient divers instrumens de music tant et si melodieusement que tous cueurs sen pouoient esjouyr . . . Mais ne veirenet ne dames, ne damoysselles, ne creature nulle ; et y avoit ung si beau pré que c'estoit soulas a veoir, car toutes manieres de bonnes fleurs et herbes aromtiques y estoient, et si y fleuroit



tant souef que tous cueurs y debvoient prendre plaisance. Si chevaucha ung petit avant, et trouva ung moult beau verger enclos et avironné d'ung petit mur tout de diverses manieres de pierres precieuses, et tout entour y avoit une vigne qui estoit toute d'or et y avoit grapes toutes d'esmeraudes; et en ce verger avoit une table mise, et estoient les treteailx de jayet, et la table de jaspe, et la nappe de blanche soye si subtilement ouvrée que c'estoit merveilles a veoir: Et assez pres de la table avoit ung beau dressouer qui estoit tout chargé de pierres precieuses et de grant plante de joyaulx precieux; au prés avoit une petite fontaine plate qui estoit d'une topase, et y venoit l'eaue par ung couloir de rubis qui estoit si cler que autre eaue ne si pouoit comparer; et yssoit l'eaue de la fontaine quant elle estoit plaine par ung conduit qui estoit de crystal, et entroit en terre tant subtilement que on ne le pouoit appercevoir: Et a l'autre coste du verger avoit ung lyt dont la chalit estoit d'yvoire entaille en grans ymages eslevez moult subtilement; et la estoit contenue l'hystoire de Lancelot et de la Dame du lac, et estoit couvert d'ung grant drap de diverses couleurs moult subtilement entrelacé, et y avoit tant d'hystoires que les yeulx en estoient tous eblouis."—C. 80.

It is the introduction of fairies, and the frequently recurring descriptions of those splendid wonders they produce, or by which they are attended, that induce me to place the composition of this romance in the end of the 14th or beginning of the 15th century, which is a century and a half later than the date of Tristan. In that work, in Lancelot du Lac, and other romances of the Round Table, there are no doubt fairies, but they are of a different species from the protectresses of Ysaie. They are merely women, as Morgain or Vivian, instructed in magic. They indeed have all hell at their command, can perform the greatest miracles, and occasion to any one the severest misfortunes. All this, however, is accomplished by intermediate agency, and they are only formidable by the intervention of demons, with whom they have formed advantageous connexions; but the second class of fairies, as those in the romance of Ysaie, were self-supported beings—they were a species of nymph or divinity, and possessed a power inherent in

themselves. Nor were these creatures merely the offspring of the imagination of romancers, but were believed to exist in the age in which they wrote. At a period much later than the composition of Ysaie, the first question asked at the Maid of Orleans, in the process carried on against her, was, if she had any familiarity with those who resorted to the Sabat of the fairies, or if she had ever attended the assemblies of the fairies held at the fountain near Dompnein, round which the evil spirits danced; and the Journal of Paris, in the reigns of Charles VI. and VII. states, that she acknowledged that, in spite of her father and mother, she had frequented the beautiful fountain of the fairies in Lorraine, which she named the good fountain of the fairies of our Lord.

There are other circumstances, besides the machinery of fairies, which may lead us to assign a late period to the composition of Ysaie; as, for instance, the introduction of Saracens, instead of Saxons, as enemies of the heroes of the romance. The French is also evidently more modern, being much less difficult, but also less energetic, than the language of Tristan or Lancelot. It is true, that the romance, as now extant, is said in the title to be "redigé et reformé en commun langage vulgaire." The pretended Redacteur professes to have adhered to the story "selon l'intention du premier hystoriographe;" but he declares that "l'original estoit en si estrange et mauvais langage mis et couché que a grant peine en ay peu entendre le sens et elucider la forme de la matiere." All this, however, was probably asserted in order to give the stamp of authority, and I have little doubt that the language and story of this romance are of the same antiquity. "The romance of Ysaie," say the authors of the Bibliotheque des Romans, "is as inferior to those by which it was preceded, in characters, sentiments, and incidents, as in language; yet the history of Ysaie offers many interesting situations, and presents many *coups de theatre*: but what renders it chiefly valuable is, that it makes us acquainted with the difference of manners which prevailed in the beginning of the 12th and end of the 14th century. The world, which is so readily accused of growing worse, had no doubt wonderfully degenerated in point of chivalry, at least during these three



centuries. At the conclusion of that period, too, the deepest shades of ignorance had gathered, and mankind were strangers to all delicacy of sentiment. The knights, indeed, still fought with courage, and hence the writers of romance continued to describe the most terrible combats. Principles of honour yet existed in the heart of the *Chevalier*, but they were concealed under a rude exterior. Devotion was fervent and sincere, but it was ill understood and worse directed. All this will be remarked in the history of Ysaie."

This romance is also one of the scarcest of the class to which it belongs, which is strong evidence of its fancied inferiority. As far as I know, it is one of the few romances which never appeared in a metrical form. There is no MS. of it extant, and there have been but two editions—one printed at Paris, 1522, small folio, by Gallyot du Pré, and the other 4to, without date, by Philippe le Noire.

The romance of

#### ARTHUR<sup>1</sup>

contains little more than the events of which we have already given an account in the preceding fabulous stories of the knights of the Round Table. The incidents, however, are better arranged, and presented in one view. It comprehends the history of the Round Table, of which Arthur was the founder, or at least the restorer, and gives an account of that monarch from his birth to the period of his tragical death.

The authors of the *Bibliothèque* inform us, with most absurd credulity, that this romance was written by one of the Sire Clerks or annalists of the Round Table: they even fix on the name of the author of Artus, and assert that it was Arrobian de Cologne, who, they say, retired with Lancelot du Lac into his hermitage after the defeat of Arthur. They argue, that it is impossible to assign an earlier origin to the romance, as it gives an account of the catastrophe of almost all the knights of the Round Table.—"*Selon toute apparence, ces chroniqueurs sont les Sires Clercs, ou officiers historiens et annalistes de cette première chevalerie du monde. Nous*

<sup>1</sup> Le Roman du Roy Artus et des compagnons de la Table Ronde, &c.

savons même leurs noms, et l'on peut conjecturer, que c'est ici l'ouvrage du premier d'entre eux, nommé Arrobian de Cologne. On croit qu'il se retira avec Lancelot du Lac, dans un même hermitage, après la terrible défaite ou périrent le Roy Artus, et la plus grande partie de ses chevaliers. La preuve que cette chronique ne fut terminée qu'après cette catastrophe c'est qu'on y voit la fin de presque tous ces héros."

In the body of the work itself, it is said to have been written by the equivocal Gualtier Map; it was printed at Paris, 1488, folio, by Jehan de Pré.

After a narrative of the events connected with the birth and succession of Arthur to the kingdom, which have been formerly related in the Book of Merlin, the romance informs us that he drove the Saxons out of his dominions, by which means he secured the public peace; but he still continued to receive much disquiet from his own family. His four nephews, especially Guavain, on pretence of the illegitimacy of their uncle, refused to acknowledge him as king. He defeated them in the field by his own skill and the sagacity of Merlin, and afterwards so far conciliated their favour by his bravery and good conduct, that they became the most faithful of his vassals.

Arthur then set out with his knights to the assistance of Laodogant, king of Carmelide in Scotland. This prince had been attacked by King Ryon, a man of a disposition so malevolent that he had formed to himself a project of possessing a mantle furred with the beards of those kings he should conquer. He had calculated with the grand master of his wardrobe that a full royal cloak would require forty beards: he had already vanquished five kings, and reckoned on a sixth beard from the chin of Laodogant. Arthur and his knights totally deranged this calculation by defeating King Ryon. Laodogant, in return for the assistance he had received, offered his daughter, the celebrated Geneura, in marriage to Arthur. Merlin, however, who does not appear to have been a flattering courtier, and who does not seem to have attached to the conservation of Laodogant's beard the importance that it merited, declared that his master must first deserve the princess. In obedience



to his oracle the enchanter, Arthur, in order to qualify himself for the nuptials, made an expedition to Britany, where he defeated Claudas, king of Berri, who had unprovokedly attacked a vassal of the British monarch.

After this exploit, Arthur returned to the court of Laodogant, where preparations were now made for his union with Geneura. This princess is described as the finest woman in the universe—her stature was noble and elegant—her complexion fair, and her eyes the finest blue of the heavens: the expression of her countenance was lively yet dignified, but sometimes tender—her understanding, naturally just, was well cultivated—her heart was feeling, compassionate, and capable of the most exalted sentiments.

On the second day of the tournaments (for without these no great festival was exhibited), an unknown knight, of a ferocious aspect, came to defy the combatants. He entered the lists, but was speedily unhorsed by Arthur, and afterwards slain by him in mortal combat (*combat a outrance*). This knight was, after his death, discovered to be King Ryon, by the mantle which he carried under his cuirass, half furnished with the spoils of vanquished monarchs.

Arthur, after his return to England with his bride, re-established the Round Table, which was transported from Scotland, for King Laodogant had it in deposit since the death of Uter, the father of Arthur. Merlin dictated the laws and regulations of this renowned association. The kings of Scotland and Norway, the princes of Armorica and Gaul, disdained not to pay a species of tribute to the English monarch, in order to be admitted into this celebrated society. The glory of the institution was completed by Pharamond, the king of the Franks, and conqueror of Gaul, arriving incognito in Britain to obtain, by his prowess and exploits, a seat at this renowned board.

The knights of the Round Table had no exterior and characteristic mark of their order, but each had a peculiar device and motto of his own. Thus Arthur carried for his arms thirteen golden crowns, with the motto *Moult de couronnes plus de vertus*.

Lancelot du Lac had six bends of or and azure—*Haut en naissance en vaillance en amour*.

His brother Hector of Mares a golden star.—*Pour etre heureux un bel astre suffit.*

King Pharamond bore the Fleur de Lis.—*Que de beaux fruits de ces fleurs doivent naitre.*

After the institution of the Round Table, Arthur conceived the design of obtaining possession of the Sangreal; but this precious relic, according to the oracles, could only be acquired by a knight who had a very rare qualification, and Perceval, it seems, was the only one whose purity of morals fitted him for this enterprise.

The story of the false Geneura, the credulity of Arthur, and the final triumph of the queen, which has been mentioned in the account of Lancelot, is fully related in the romance of Arthur.

After Geneura was reinstated in the affections of her husband, the glory and domestic felicity of Arthur seem to have been at their height, but the period of the destruction of the first chivalry in the world was now fast approaching. Mordret, the son of Arthur, by the Queen of Orkney, disputed the right of succession with the nephews of that monarch. Arthur sustained the claims of his nephew Gauvain against this unworthy and illegitimate son, and Mordret assembled under his banners all those who had solicited and had been refused admittance to the Round Table. Some of the knights of Arthur were still engaged with Perceval in the conquest of the Sangreal; the rest defended themselves with unexampled valour, but Arthur and his chivalry were finally overthrown. The Saracens, who supported Mordret, reached the division commanded by the king. Arthur was overpowered by numbers and mortally wounded; his faithful squire, Goifled, who saw him expire, carried off his famous sword Escalibor, and threw it into a lake. Lancelot, who, in the romance of his own name, does not arrive in England till after this battle, had meanwhile attacked the battalion which Mordret commanded, put it to flight, and pursued its leader to the sea-shore. There he overtook him, and plunged his sword into his bosom. Lancelot having routed his whole host, returned exulting to the tents of Arthur, where he learned the fate of his sovereign. After these events the beautiful Geneura re-



tired to a convent, and Lancelot closed his life in a hermitage.

It appears strange at first sight, that Arthur and his knights should be represented in romance, as falling in battle, as well as Charlemagne with all his peerage, at a time when success in war was thought necessary to complete the character of a warrior. But the same fate has been attributed to all the fabulous chiefs of half-civilised nations, who have invariably represented their favourite leaders as destroyed by a concealed and treacherous enemy. Achilles, at least according to the fables of the middle age, was thus slain by Paris; and Rustan, the great Persian hero, fell a victim to the snares of Bahaman, the son of his mortal foe Isfendar. This has probably arisen from poets and romancers wishing to spare their heroes the suspicion of having died in bed by the languor of disease, to which any violent death is preferred by barbarous nations.—“He’ll be strapped up on the kind gallows of Crieff, where his father died, and his goodsire died, and where I hope he’ll live to die himself, if he’s not shot or slashed in a creagh.” “You hope such a death for your friend, Evan?” “And that do I e’en; would you have me wish him to die in yon den of his, like a mangy tyke?”—(*Waverley*).

But though Arthur was universally believed to have been discomfited, and was by some supposed to have perished in the battle with Mordret, the expectation of his return to restore the Round Table, and to rule over Britain, was long and fondly cherished in Wales. Alanus de Insulis, who was born in 1109, says, that if any one were heard in Bretagne to deny that Arthur was yet alive, he would be stoned. This tradition formed a favourite subject of the legends of the bards: and on his imaginary tomb there was inscribed,

Hic jacet Arthurus rex quondam rexque futurus.  
The belief in Arthur’s return probably originated with the stories in the romance of Lancelot, and other tales of Chivalry, concerning his disappearance with his sister Morgana, after the battle; some of which bear a striking resemblance to what Homer tells us of Sarpedon, that Apollo washed his wounds in a stream, anointed them with ambrosia,

and having clothed him in ambrosial garments, delivered him to the care of Sleep, to be conveyed to Lycia. But though no doubt was entertained as to the re-appearance of Arthur, very different notions prevailed with regard to his state of intermediate being. According to some traditions, he drove through the air in a chariot with prodigious noise and velocity; while, according to others, he had assumed the shape of a raven, a bird which it became a capital crime in Wales to destroy. It was more generally fabled that he remained in subterraneous existence, a superstition alluded to by Milton:

Arthur, their chief, who even now prepares  
In subterraneous being future wars.

COWPER’S *Milton*.

The various traditions concerning the disappearance and coming of this fabulous monarch, have been embodied in Warton’s *Grave of King Arthur*, and are represented as sung by the Welch bards, for the amusement of Henry II., when he passed through their country on an expedition to Ireland:—

“Then gifted bards, a rival throng,  
From distant Mona, nurse of song;  
From Teivi, fringed with umbrage brown,  
From Elvy’s vale and Cader’s crown,  
From many a sunless solitude  
Of Radnor’s inmost mountains rude;  
From many a shaggy precipice,  
That shades Ierne’s hoarse abyss,  
To crown the banquet’s solemn close,  
Themes of British glory chose.

“O’er Cornwall’s cliffs the tempest roared,  
High the screaming seamew soared;  
On Tintagel’s topmost tower,  
Darksome fell the sleety shower,  
When Arthur ranged his red-cross ranks  
On conscious Camlan’s crimsoned banks,  
By Mordred’s faithless guile decreed,  
Beneath a Saxon spear to bleed!  
Yet, in vain a Paynim foe  
Armed with fate the mighty blow;  
For when he fell, an Elfin Queen,  
All in secret and unseen,  
O’er the fainting hero threw  
Her mantle of ambrosial blue;  
And bade her spirits bear him far,  
In Merlin’s agate-axled car,  
To her green isles enamelled steep,  
Far in the navel of the deep.  
O’er his wounds she sprinkled dew,  
From flowers that in Arabia grew;  
On a rich enchanted bed  
She pillowed his majestic head;



O'er his brow with whispers bland,  
 Thrice she waved an opiate wand ;  
 And to soft music's airy sound  
 Her magic curtains closed around :  
 There renewed the vital spring,  
 Again he reigns a mighty king ;  
 And many a fair and fragrant clime,  
 Blooming in immortal prime,  
 By gales of Eden ever fanned  
 Owns the monarch's high command :  
 Thence to Britain shall return,  
 If right, prophetic rolls I learn,  
 Borne on victory's spreading plume,  
 His ancient sceptre to resume ;  
 Once more in old heroic pride,  
 His barbed courser to bestride ;  
 His knightly table to restore  
 And brave the tournaments of yore."

He ceased : when on the tuneful stage  
 Advanced a bard of aspect sage.  
 " When Arthur bowed his haughty crest,  
 No princess veiled in azure vest,  
 Snatched him by Merlin's potent spell,  
 In groves of golden bliss to dwell ;  
 Where crowned with wreaths of misletoe,  
 Slaughtered kings in glory go.  
 But when he fell, with winged speed  
 His champions on a milk-white steed,  
 From the battle's hurricane,  
 Bore him to Joseph's towered fane,  
 In the fair vale of Avalon :  
 There with chaunted orison  
 And the long blaze of tapers clear,  
 The stoled fathers met the bier ;  
 Through the dim aisles, in order dread  
 Of martial woe the chief they led,  
 And deep entombed in holy ground  
 Before the altar's solemn bound :  
 Around no dusky banners wave,  
 No mouldering trophies mark his grave,  
 The faded tomb, with honour due,  
 'Tis thine, O Henry ! to renew.  
 There shall thine eye, with wild amaze,  
 On his gigantic stature gaze,  
 There shalt thou find the monarch laid  
 All in warrior weeds arrayed,  
 Wearing in death his helmet crown,  
 And weapons huge of old renown—  
 Martial prince, 'tis thine to save,  
 From dark oblivion, ARTHUR'S GRAVE."

I have now given an account of the romances of the fabulous history of Britain, as far as Arthur and his knights are concerned, which form by far the largest proportion of the number.

<sup>1</sup> Le Roman de Gyron le Courtois traduit de Branor le Brun le vieil Chevalier qui avoit plus de cent ans d' age, lequel vint a la cour du roy Artus, accompagné d' une demoiselle pour s' éprouver a l'

There are two romances connected with the imaginary history of Britain, preceding the time of Arthur, and two which relate the fabulous incidents posterior to his reign.

Those which are first in the order of events, happen to be also the earliest, considered as to the dates of their composition. One of these relates the adventures of

#### GYRON LE COURTOIS,<sup>1</sup>

a romance which chiefly hinges on the disinterested friendship of Gyron for Danayn the Red, and the ungrateful return he receives.

This work was written by Rusticien de Pise, who was also the author of *Meliadus*, and lived during the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I. of England. Rusticien informs us, that Gyron was translated by him from the book of Edward I., when he went to the conquest of the Holy Land, " et saichez tout vrayement que cestuy livre fut traduit du livre du Monseigneur Edouart le roi d' Angleterre, en celluy tems que il passa oultre la mer, au service de nostre seigneur, pour conquerir le Saint Sepulchre. Et maistre Rusticien de Puise compila ce Romant : car de cellui livre au roi Edouart d' Angleterre translata il toutes les merveilleuses qui sont en cestuy livre." Who the original author was from whom Rusticien compiled, or what was the nature of this book of King Edward's, which Rusticien used, it is impossible to conjecture. The romance of Gyron, as written by Rusticien de Pise, was first printed by Verard, Paris, 1494, in folio ; and afterwards in 1519.

In this fabulous work we are informed that Brehus, surnamed Sans Pitie, in the course of his unmerciful adventures, one day entered a cavern fitted up with dead bodies, and inhabited by two old knights, who prove to be the father and grandfather of the hero of this romance. Having boasted of the exploits which were performed by their companions in arms in their own days, Brehus contends that they were surpassed by those of a knight, who excelled all others in courtesy and valour, and was the admiration of the British court, though it was unknown

encontre des jeunes Chevaliers, &c. Et traite ledit des plus grandes adventures que jadis advinrent aux Chevaliers Errans ; avec la devise et les armes de tous les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde.



whence he came, or what was his lineage. *Grant Pere Gyron*, as he is called, conjectures from this description that Brehus alluded to his grandson, Gyron the Courteous. The oldest Gyron and his son had quitted the inheritance of the throne of Gaul, in order to devote themselves to knight errantry, which they had in turn abandoned for the tranquil and temperate life they were then enjoying. They thought it necessary, however, to make an apology for their meagre and squalid appearance, which they attributed to the want of provisions, "car nous mangeons si pourement en cestuy lieu, ou vous nous voyez, que a grant peine en pouons nous soubstenir nostre vie."

The crown which the Gyrons abdicated had been usurped by Pharamond; and their descendant, Gyron the Courteous, had been compelled to embrace the life of a knight errant. In the course of his adventures he became the companion in arms of Danayn the Red, lord of the castle of Maloanc, whose wife, the lady of Maloanc, was the most beautiful woman in Britain. This lady was enamoured of Gyron, and saw that she was by no means indifferent to the knight; but all her inducements proved ineffectual to persuade him to betray his friend.

At length Gyron and Danayn proceeded to a tournament, proclaimed at the British court, whither they were followed by the lady of Maloanc. During the celebration of the tournament, Danayn was unexpectedly called home, in order to avenge the death of one of his relatives, who had been treacherously murdered. At his departure he consigned his wife to the charge of Gyron, who was now distracted by the new temptations presented, and the additional claim on his honour. While roaming through a forest, perplexed with these conflicting emotions, he overheard Messire Lac, as he is called, express a passion for the lady of Maloanc; Lac accosted him, and commenced a long and tedious story, which he had no sooner concluded, than he proposed to tell another. This is declined by Gyron, but is insisted on by Lac,—“en nom Dieu, fait le Chevalier, Je vous en compteray ung autre. Je n'en vueil point ouyr, fait Gyron. Nostre vassal, fait le Chevalier, or saichez qu'il est me-

stier que vous l'escoutez; et que si vous ne le me laissez compter en telle maniere que Je soies couroussé, Je le vous compteray donc en telle guyse qu'il ne sera jour de vostre vie qu'il ne vous en souviengne." Messire Lac accordingly proceeds to tell his story at the point of the sword. The object of these tedious narratives was to detain Gyron till Lac's arrangements for carrying off the lady of Maloanc had been completed. Gyron, however, ultimately frustrates all his designs, overthrows Lac in single combat, and rescues the lady of Maloanc, who had fallen under his power. "Et quant la belle dame de Maloanc, qui ja avoit toute sa paour oublié, se voit toute seule avec le Chevalier du monde qu'elle aymoît le plus, et qui si preud homme des armes estoit qu'il avoit tout le monde passé, et qui estoit plus beau et plus gracieulx que tous les autres en toutes choses, elle ne scait a celluy point quelle en doit dire; tout le coeur luy va remuant. Orendroit luy veult elle parler d'amours, et maintenant s'en retient." At length, when they had reached the side of a delightful fountain, she ventures to ask Gyron if he be in love. The knight, unable longer to restrain his emotions, confesses that she was and had long been the sole object of his adoration. A mutual confession of a secret, but long subsisting attachment, spares the minutiae of courtship; and Gyron appears to have been on the eve of violating that fidelity to his friend, which he had so long preserved, when he fortunately casts his eyes on the hilt of his sword, where was inscribed the motto,—*Loyaulté passe tout—Faulseté honit tout*. He is awakened to such a sense of his own unworthiness, and of self-indignation, by this inscription, that he plunges the sword into his bosom. While lying wounded by the side of the fountain, Danayn, who had heard some false report of the infidelity of his wife and his friend, arrives at the spot, on his return to the British court. Gyron conceals the part which the lady bore in the adventure, and merely relates, that he had inflicted the wound as a punishment of his mental infidelity. The friendship of Danayn, instead of being diminished, is thus redoubled, and the wounded knight is conveyed to the castle of Maloanc.



When Gyron was restored to health, he formed a new attachment to a damsel, called Bloye, of whom he daily became more deeply enamoured. With this lady Danayn also fell in love, and secretly carried her off, regardless of the happiness of his friend, and unmindful of the striking example which he had experienced of his fidelity. The resentment of Gyron was proportioned to the injury he had received, and the ingratitude of him by whom it was inflicted: He immediately set out in quest of the traitor, and during a year's wandering experienced many perilous and romantic adventures, totally foreign to the object of his search.

One day, says the romance, when the season was fair and clear, as it might be in the end of October, it happened that the road which Gyron held conducted him to the foot of a hill. The hill was white with snow, for it was winter, but the plain was green as if it had been the month of May. At the foot of this hill, in the plain, and beneath a tree, gurgled a fountain most beautiful and most delightful, and under that tree sat a knight, armed with hauberk and greaves; his other arms were near him, and his horse was tied to the tree. By the knight sat a lady so beautiful that she was a miracle to behold; and if any one were to ask who was the knight, I would say it was Danayn the Red, the brave knight; as the lady seated before him was no other than the beautiful Lady Bloye, who had been so much beloved by Gyron.<sup>1</sup>

A desperate combat ensued between the knights, in which Danayn was vanquished: Gyron spared his life, but refused to be reconciled to him, and departed with Bloye, of whom he was more enamoured than ever.

Some years afterwards, Bloye engaged in an adventure with her lover Gyron, which had a very unfortunate issue, as they were both imprisoned, and it was not till after a long period that they were freed by the valour of Danayn, who thus made some reparation for the injuries he had formerly inflicted on his friend. Gyron and his lady, however, were a second time thrown into confinement by the treachery of the Knight of the Tower,

and are left in thralldom at the termination of the work, which concludes with the exploits of a son of Gyron by Bloye, referring the reader for an account of the deliverance of his parents to the romance of Meliadus:—"Mais quant ils furent delivrez ne fais Je point de mention, pour ce que le livre de Latin se finist en ceste endroit quant a leurs faits; mais le Romant du Roy Meliadus de Leonnoys dit la maniere comment ils furent delivrez, et par qui."

The great fault, however, of the romance of Gyron is, not that it terminates too soon, but that it is too long protracted. It ought to have concluded with the overthrow of Danayn and the recovery of Bloye by Gyron; for the adventures of their son, which form a considerable part of the romance, are miserably tagged to the main subject. Indeed it is a common blemish in romances of chivalry, that there is no repose in them, and that the reader is led on from generation to generation after the principal interest is exhausted. The earlier part, however, of the romance is uncommonly interesting, and the style is perhaps the finest of all the old fabulous histories of Britain; accordingly, it was extremely popular in this country and France, and was translated at an early period into many different languages of Europe. It is the subject of an Italian poem of the 16th century, entitled *Girone Cortese*, versified in ottava rima, and containing 24 cantos. This poem was written by the celebrated Alamanni, author of the *Coltivazione*, but never obtained much popularity, owing to an injudicious imitation of the ancient epic poems in a romantic subject. That part of the romance which relates to the adventures of Gyron with the lady of Maloanc, has been beautifully versified by Wieland, the German poet, well known as the author of *Oberon*.

The second romance concerning events preceding the reign of Arthur, to which I alluded, and which exhibits a different set of heroes from the tales of the Round Table, is

#### PERCEFOREST,<sup>1</sup>

which comprehends the fabulous history of

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 14.

<sup>1</sup> La tres elegante, delicieuse, melliflue, et tres



Britain, previous to the age of Arthur. It is the longest and best known romance of the class to which it belongs, and is the work which St Palaye, and similar writers, have chiefly selected for illustrations and proofs of the manners of the times, and institutions of chivalry.

It is strange that Perceforest, which sets all chronology, geography, and probability at defiance, more boldly than almost any other romance, should begin with a profound, and by no means absurd, investigation concerning the topography of Britain, and the earliest ages of its history. Julius Cæsar, Pliny, Bede, and Solinus, are cited with the utmost ostentation of learning.

The author, however, soon enters on the regions of fiction. That part of his work which immediately succeeds the geographical disquisition, corresponds pretty closely with the fabulous history of Geoffrey of Monmouth; he relates that Brutus, or Brut, the son of Sylvius, and great grandson of Æneas, having killed his father by mischance, fled to the states of a Greek king, called Pandrasus, whose daughter Imogene he espoused. From this kingdom he fitted out an expedition, and landed in Albion, since called Britain from his name, and conquered the whole country with the assistance of Corinæus, another Trojan chief whom he had picked up on his voyage. Most of the European nations were anciently fond of tracing their descent from Troy. The greater part of them had been at one time provincial to the Romans; and the Britons, who remained so long under their dominion, may have imbibed a general notion of the Trojan story from their conquerors. As Rome, from becoming the capital of the supreme pontiff, was a city highly revered and distinguished, and as the Trojans were believed to be its founders, an emulation gradually arose among the nations of Europe, of claiming descent from the same respectable origin. Nor were the monks and other eccle-

siastics (the only writers and readers of the age) uninterested in broaching and maintaining such an opinion. But, as to the story of Brutus, who is represented as the founder of the kingdom of Britain, in Geoffrey and Perceforest, and is the hero of the most ancient, as well as the most celebrated of all the metrical romances, it may be presumed that it was not invented till after the ninth century, as Nennius, who lived towards the close of it, mentions him with great obscurity, and seems totally unacquainted with the British affairs which preceded Cæsar's invasion.

After the death of Brutus, the author of Perceforest drags us through the history of his numerous descendants. One of these monarchs is King Leyr, whose story was first related of a Roman emperor in the *Gesta Romanorum*, and was afterwards told of the British monarch, in the *Chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth*. These works were the origin of Shakspeare's celebrated tragedy, which, however, differs so far from them, that both in Geoffrey's *Chronicles* and Perceforest, the events have a happy conclusion, as Cordelia defeats her sisters, and reinstates her father on the throne. From Perceforest the tale had found its way into Fabian's *Concurrence of Stories*, written in the time of Henry VII., and thence passed into various Lamentable ballads of the death of King Leyr and his three daughters, of which the catastrophe probably suggested to Shakspeare the tragic termination which he has given to his drama. The story of King Lear is also in the 15th chapter of the third book of Warner's *Albion's England*, and in Spenser's *Fairy Queen* (book 2, canto 10), where, in conformity with the romance and chronicle, the war against the sisters has a successful termination:—

So to his crown she him restored again,  
In which he dyde, made ripe for death by eld.

Gorboduc, who succeeded to the crown of Britain, soon after the death of Lear, profited so little by the example of his predecessor,

plaisante hystoire du tres noble, victorieux, et excellentissime Roy Perceforest Roy de la Grant Bretaigne, fundateur du Franc Palais et du Temple du Souverain Dieu; avec les merueilleuses enterprinses, faits, et adventures du tres belliqueulx Gaddiffer Roy d' Escosse, lesquelz l'Empereur Alexandre le Grant couronna Roys soubz son obeissance.

en laquelle hystoire le lecteur pourra veoir la source et decoration de toute Chevalerie, culture de vraye noblesse, prouesses et conquestes infinies accomplies des le temps de Julius Cesar; avecques plusieurs propheties, comptes d'amans et leurs diverses fortunes.



that he divided his realm during his life between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex, whose bloody history is the subject of the first regular English tragedy: it was partly written by Thomas Sackville Lord Buckhurst, was acted in 1561, and afterwards printed in 1565, under the name of Gorboduc. Sir Philip Sidney says that this drama climbs to the height of Seneca, and Pope has pronounced the much higher eulogy, that it possesses "an unaffected perspicuity of style, and an easy flow in the numbers ; in a word, *that* chastity, correctness, and gravity of style, which are so essential to tragedy, and which all the tragic poets who followed, not excepting Shakspeare himself, either little understood or perpetually neglected." Both in the drama and romance, the princes, between whom the kingdom had been divided, soon fell to dissension, and the younger stabbed the elder : the mother, who more dearly loved the elder, having killed his brother in revenge, the people, indignant at the cruelty of the deed, rose in rebellion, and murdered both father and mother. The nobles then assembled and destroyed most of the rebels, but afterwards became embroiled in a civil war, in which they and their issue were all slain.

Brennus and Belinus, were the first monarchs who reigned over the almost depopulated country. These joint sovereigns, who, we are informed, with rare historical confusion, were contemporary with Artaxerxes, king of Greece, having subdued Gaul, besieged and burned Rome during the consulship of Fabius and Porsenna.

At length, after a long succession of princes of the family of Brutus, his race fortunately became extinct on the demise of King Pyr : during this interregnum the goddess Venus recommended to the inhabitants to watch for a certain time on the sea-shore, where they would find a king properly qualified to govern them.

About this period Alexander the Great was employed in the conquest of Asia. Parmenio, his lieutenant, slew Gaddiffer, governor of Galde, a city between India and Babylon, who had imprudently attacked the Greek army, on account of some depredations it had committed. Alexander, who was a generous prince, took the children of Gaddiffer under his protection, and in a great battle defeated

Claurus, who had seized on their territory. Claurus was killed in the engagement, and his son Porus taken prisoner. Alexander, however, restored to the latter his father's kingdom, on condition that he should marry Feronas, a lady of whom he knew that Porus was enamoured. Wives are also provided by this bounteous monarch for Betis, afterwards called Perceforest, and his brother Gaddiffer, the two sons of old Gaddiffer, governor of Galde.

The nuptials of Porus were celebrated in the city of Glodofard. About a league from this town, there was an island of the sea called Ciceron, where Venus was worshipped. To this isle Alexander set out on a pilgrimage with all his *knights*, but scarcely had they sailed when a frightful tempest arose, which drove their fleet on the coast of England ; and a frightful tempest it must have been which carried a fleet from the East Indies to the shores of Britain.

Alexander landed with his barons at the moment the inhabitants, in obedience to the oracle of Venus, were waiting by the sea-side to receive a king, and being accordingly entreated to give them a monarch, he crowned Betis king of England, and Gaddiffer of Scotland. The Macedonian hero solemnized their coronation by the institution of tournaments, of which the intention was to renovate the ancient valour of Britons, who, even in that early age, were suspected of degenerating from their forefathers. These spectacles, which were attended by all the ladies and knights of the surrounding country, are described at full length.

After the tournaments were concluded, King Betis conceived the project of constructing a palace from the wood of the forest of Glar, which enchanters defended by the most formidable incantations. Betis accordingly set out on this expedition, and proceeded a considerable way in the forest without experiencing any adventures. At length he came to a fountain, where stood an image with an ivory horn, which the statue sounded on his approach. On this warning, the magician Darnant, the inhabitant and guardian of the grove, issued forth in knightly armour. A combat ensued, and Darnant being defeated, fled away. Betis, in the pursuit, met with



enchanted rivers and other obstacles, raised by the power of magic. He at last overtook Darnant at the gate of a delightful castle, but, when about to slay him, the sorcerer changed himself to the resemblance of the beautiful Idorus, the wife of Betis. The king then embraced him with transport, but received a wound in return, on which he instantly cut off the head of the magician.<sup>1</sup> The enchantments were now at an end, and Betis, on account of this exploit, acquired the name of Perceforest. But the wood was ever after known by the name of the forest of Darnant. We are told in the romance of Lancelot du Lac, that Merlin was confined by his mistress in the forest of Darnant, "*qui marchoit a la mer de Cornouailles et a la mer de Sorelloys.*" The idea of this forest may have arisen from that of Marseilles, in the Pharsalia, which was hewn down by Cæsar, and may in turn have suggested the enchanted wood to Tasso. Like Rinaldo, Betis surmounts the obstacles presented by necromancy to his design. As the resolution of the Italian hero is for a moment shaken by a demon from the tree, assuming the appearance of the beautiful Armida, so the king of England is about to save the chief magician, who had clothed himself with the form of the fair Idorus.

The labours of Perceforest were not completed by the death of Darnant, as he had many combats to sustain with the son and brothers of that enchanter. Alexander, surprised at his delay in returning from the forest, set out in quest of him : on his way he encountered the family of Darnant, and carried on a long intrigue with Sibille, the Lady of the Lake in those days, from which amour sprung the ancestor of the renowned Arthur.

After the termination of a long war against the posterity of Darnant, of which the siege of Malebranche is the leading incident, tournaments were exhibited by the knights of a new order of chivalry, instituted by Alexander and Perceforest. These were attended by the hermit Pergamon, who had been a companion of Brut, and seems to have lived through the intervening centuries for no end but to be present at these tiresome spectacles. The tournaments being concluded, Alexander,

whom we have hitherto seen acting so conspicuous a part in this romance, set off for Babylon. The Macedonian monarch was introduced into many other tales of chivalry ; he was chiefly indebted for his romantic decoration to a fabulous account of his conquests, which was compiled from eastern fictions by Simeon Seth, but passed under the name of Callisthenes, and was translated into almost all the languages of Europe during the middle ages.

About the time that Alexander returned to Asia, Gaddiffer, the brother of Perceforest, went to take possession of his kingdom of Scotland, of which country there is more said in this work than in any other romance of chivalry. After Gaddiffer arrived in Scotland, he proceeded on an excursion through his dominions, for the sake of dispensing justice and reforming the savage manners of his subjects ; and the king and his courtiers, says the romance, entered on the deserts of Scotland, and travelled two days without seeing town, castle, or human being. At length they came to a delightful meadow, through which a fine river flowed. The king regretted that this district was so thinly peopled, but at length perceived some tame cows, and children of ten or twelve years of age running amongst them. The knight Estonne seized one of these tender savages, who, like her companions, was clothed with a sheep skin, but proved to be a girl of twelve years of age. She was extremely handsome, but much more remarkable for beauty than good manners ; for, on looking down, the knight perceived that his fair prisoner was gratifying either her hunger or resentment, by demolishing the neck of his courser. She also spoke such bad Greek, that it was impossible to comprehend her verbal communications, though accompanied by gestures unusually energetic.

After Gaddiffer had done all in his power to amend the unpolished fashions of his infant kingdom, the incidents related have but a very remote connection with his history, or that of his brother Perceforest, the titular hero of the romance. Every thing like unity of action is disregarded, and the rest of the work is occupied with the insulated adventures of individual knights. A great proportion of these is attributed to Estonne, lord

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 15.



of the Scotch deserts. This great landed proprietor was in the good graces of a spirit called Zephyr, who, assuming a variety of shapes, carried his favourite wherever he desired. Estonne, at length, while dozing by an enchanted fountain, was murdered by Bruyant Without Faith. His death was revenged by his son Passelion, whose adventures are the most entertaining in the latter part of the romance; when only two years old he became a paragon of chivalry, and not long after was carried, by a spirit, around Tartarus, in a manner which may have suggested some of the scenes in the *Comedia* of Dante.

Near the middle of the romance, an account is given of the invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar. This chief had landed on a former occasion, but had been worsted in single combat by the British knight Lyonnell; his second attempt was more successful, owing to the treachery of the wife of Bethides, son of Perceforest, a lady to whom the author assigns an intrigue with Lucus, a Roman senator. All the knights of Britain were destroyed in a great battle. Their bodies are indeed still preserved in Aran, an Irish island, where the climate is such that nothing can decay: but the exploits of a new race of heroes fill up the romance. Of these the chief is Gallifer, grandson of old Gaddiffer, king of Scotland, who experienced innumerable adventures in his pursuit of the lady with two dragons. He also put an end to the enchantments at the tomb of Darnant, which seems to have been the rendezvous of all the evil spirits in Great Britain. At length having delivered his country from the anarchy in which it was left by the Romans, he was acknowledged as sovereign of Britain, but did not long enjoy this exaltation, as he was expelled by Scapiol, a German knight, who usurped the throne. Olofer, one of the deposed monarch's sons, became a great favourite of the new king; the other, named Gallafer, retired to a distant part of the island, at first studied astronomy, and afterwards founded a new sovereignty.

In this kingdom the royal astronomer was visited and converted by Alain, a christian disciple, who persuaded him to change his heathenish name of Gallaffer into Arfaran. He soon after resigned his crown to Josue,

Alain's brother, and proceeded to preach the gospel to his ancestors, Perceforest and Gaddiffer, who, the reader will be surprised to hear, were yet in existence, and residing in the island of Life (supposed Wight). Perceforest had been severely handled in the wars with the Romans; he had received twelve mortal wounds on the head: he had left his right hand on the field of battle; the other hung by a fibre; his belly was laid open in four places, and he was lame of his left foot. In this fractional state he had passed into the island of Life, where he was joined by his brother Gaddiffer, and afterwards by the deposed Galliffer. On landing on this island, King Arfaran beheld a temple, and, looking in, perceived a group of worshippers before the altar. They were clothed in sheep's-skins; their hair, whiter than snow, descended to their heels; their beards covered their breasts, and thence extended to their knees. These antiques consisted of Dardanon, who had come to Britain soon after Brut; Gaddiffer, with his queen; Gallifer, and the relics of Perceforest. King Arfaran having given them an abridgement of the doctrines of the Old and New Testament, they expressed a great desire of death. For this special purpose they departed from the isle of Life, and arrived on a shore where five monuments had spontaneously arisen for their accommodation. Dardanon, as the oldest, is honoured with sepulchral precedence, and the rest follow according to seniority. These monuments may have suggested to Tasso, the self-formed sepulchre which rose to receive the body of Sueno (*Gerus. Lib. c. 8*); and that which in his Rinaldo miraculously enclosed the Knight of the Tomb (*c. 7*).

In this romance the concluding incident of the tombs is indeed abundantly ludicrous, but it has been rendered impressive by description. Nothing can be better painted than the voyage from the isle of Life, and arrival at the unknown solitary shore; the mysterious voice directing where to proceed; the midnight journey through the wood; the five monuments rising under the light of the moon; the gradual decay of the venerable band, and the voluntary resignation of their breath into the hands of their Creator.

Indeed, ludicrous incident and beautiful



description form the chief characteristics of the work. I know no romance of chivalry which more abounds in the beauties and faults of that species of composition ; all unity of action, probability, and chronological accuracy are laid aside ; but there is an endless variety of enchantments, and a wonderful luxuriance of description.

There is a great difference among the romances concerning the early history of Great Britain, with regard to the introduction of marvellous embellishments. Thus it is impossible to conceive two works more completely different than *Perceforest* and *Meliadus*, of which we have formerly given an account. The latter is almost entirely filled with descriptions of battles and tournaments, and is adorned with no supernatural ornaments. *Perceforest*, on the other hand, abounds with evil spirits, fairies, enchanters, and all those specious wonders which constitute the soul of romance. Dreams, too, and visions, which we have seen were so much used by Heliodorus, Tatius, &c., and so little in the other romances of chivalry, are common in *Perceforest*.

From the endless variety of enchantments it contains, this romance is perhaps the most entertaining, and has become the most popular of the class with which it has been ranged. In consequence of the information it comprehends concerning the manners of the period in which it was written, especially the solemnities observed at tournaments, and the *costume* of our ancestors, it is also the most instructive, and has been chosen as a text-book by M. de Sainte Palaye, and other inquirers into the history and habits of the middle ages. It is said that *Perceforest* was one of the books which Charles IX., during his education, chiefly busied himself in reading ; and that to this study he was enjoined (I cannot discover with what view) by his mother Catherine de Medicis.

Mr Warton informs us that *Perceforest* was originally written in verse about the year 1220. It is difficult to say precisely at what time it was reduced to prose, but it was probably subsequent to the annexation of Dauphiny to the crown of France, as the son of the King of Galles (Wales) is called the dauphin, which, I think, also proves that the

author was a Frenchman. With regard to his name I cannot give even the inconsistent information which I have collected concerning the other writers of romance. There is nothing said on this subject in the preface, which is merely an address to the French nobility, loaded with extravagant compliments, and containing a summary of the whole. The author just hints that he had borrowed the incidents, contained in *Perceforest*, from a preceding work. It is in the second chapter that the fabulous story of its origin is related. We are there told that Philip, Count of Hainault, attended the daughter of the King of France to England, in order to be present at her nuptials with Edward, which were celebrated in 1286. During the count's residence in England, he went on an excursion to the northern part of the kingdom, and arrived one day at a monastery situated on the banks of the Humber. The abbot received him with much politeness, and conducted him through the apartments of the convent. Among other places they entered an old tower, which was then repairing, where the abbot pointed out a vault in the deep walls, which had lately been discovered by the workmen. He informed his guest that in this vault there had been found an old chronicle which no one could read, till a Greek Clerc having come to study philosophy in this country, translated it from the Greek into the Latin language. The count insisted on having a loan of the Latin version ; and, on his return to his own territories, took it with him to Hainault, where it was copied. We are farther told in the course of the work, that the first part of this MS. was originally written by Cressus, *maitre d' hotel* to Alexander the Great. To Cressus the knights every year related their exploits on oath. He was thus enabled to make a compilation, which was preserved by Paustounet, a minstrel, and read by his son Pousson at the coronation of King Gallafer. With this recital the court were so much delighted, that Pousson was commanded by the king to continue the adventures of the knights of his own period, and his labours accordingly formed the last part of the romance of *Perceforest*.

The whole work occupies three volumes folio, which were first printed in 1528, by Gal-



lyot du Pré, at Paris, and afterwards at the same place in 1531.

It has already been mentioned that there are two romances which recount events subsequent to those concerning Arthur or his knights—Artus de la Bretagne, and Cleriadus, both of which may be regarded as continuations of the fabulous history of the Round Table. The authors of these works do not fix the period in which these two descendants of the great Arthur flourished; but the romances themselves have no doubt been composed at a date much posterior to Lancelot or Tristan.

#### ARTUS DE LA BRETAGNE,

which, I think, is the earliest of the two, is supposed by the authors of the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, to have been written during the reign of Charles the Sixth of France, who died in 1422.—First, because the decorations given to the knights and heroines are the same with those which were in fashion while Charles swayed the sceptre; and, secondly, because the language is nearly of the same antiquity with that of Froissard, who lived in the time of that monarch. In the court of his queen, Isabella of Bavaria, it is said splendour and gallantry reigned in spite of disorder and proscription.—Festivals and tournaments were revived by her to amuse the clouded mind of her husband, or occupy his attention when gleams of reason disclosed to him the miseries of his kingdom.—These exhibitions served to relume that romantic spirit of chivalry which had blazed with so much lustre in the better ages of France, and which was not unsuitable to the character of its unfortunate monarch.

I suspect, however, that too early a date has been assigned to this as to most other romances of chivalry; and there is good reason to suppose that it was not written till some years after the accession of Charles VIII., who ascended the throne in 1483. The subject of the romance is the adventures of a duke of Britany, and the disgrace of Perona, an Austrian princess, whose alliance having been solicited, was finally rejected by the heir to that dukedom, under circumstances by no means creditable to the lady, after she had

arrived at his court. Now, it is well known, that in 1489, the French council determined to *send back* the princess Margaret of Austria, daughter of Maximilian, to whom the young monarch had been long betrothed, and who had arrived at Paris, where she bore the title of Madame la Dauphine. At the same time, the council resolved to demand Anne of Britany in her place, and the nuptials by which that last great fief was united to the dominions of France, were celebrated in 1491. Now, the romance of Arthur of Britany was first printed in 1493, and I have little doubt was written immediately before its publication, during these important transactions at the court of France, in order to compliment the new queen by celebrating the exploits of her ancestors, and recording the disgrace of her rival. The language of the romance, I confess, appears somewhat too ancient for the close of the 15th century; but it was natural for an author of romance and chivalry, rather to adopt the phraseology which was falling into disuse, than to affect a style which had recently come into vogue.

The distinguished part which Anne of Britany performed on the political theatre of France, during the reigns of Charles VIII. and Lewis XII., to whom she was successively united; and the great popularity of her character, may have contributed to the circulation of Artus de la Bretagne, of which there were three editions subsequent to that in 1493; one in 4to, 1502; a second in 1539, and the last in 1584.

This romance comprehends the adventures of Arthur, son of John duke of Britany, who was descended from the celebrated Lancelot du Lac. A renowned knight, called Gouvernau from his employment, was appointed tutor to this young prince. One day, while engaged in the pleasures of the chace, the preceptor and his pupil being separated from their party in a forest, arrive at a cottage, where an elderly lady, whose husband had been once a powerful baron, resided with her daughter Jeanette. Arthur is enchanted with the beauty of the damsel, bestows on her the revenues of the spot, and often repeats his visit.<sup>1</sup>

The mother of Arthur, afraid, from his

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 16.



frequent absence, that he is about to be betrayed into an alliance unsuitable to his birth, proposes to the duke to demand Perona, daughter of the duchess of Austria, in marriage for their son. This young lady possessed but an indifferent reputation, and the duke for sometime declines the connexion, but is at last forced to consent to the wishes of his wife. The seneschal is sent as a proxy, and Perona, who had cogent reasons to accelerate her nuptials, arrives soon after with great ceremony at Nantes.

During the preparations for his marriage, Arthur continues to frequent the cottage. He finds Jeannette less troubled than he expected by the news of his approaching nuptials; she merely informs him, that she also was about to be united, that her intended husband resembled Arthur in form, and was matchless in nobility and power.

These ambiguous expressions of Jeannette, and her apparent indifference, are accounted for in the following manner:—During the preparations for the marriage, Lucca, the mother of Perona, had been in some tribulation, as she was aware of the backsliding of her daughter. Ancel, one of her knights, for he too was in the secret, suggests to the Austrian family a stratagem similar to that which for some time preserved the fame of Yseult of Cornwall. He explains that there is a damsel in the neighbourhood called Jeannette, whose mother might be bribed to lend her daughter as a substitute for Perona till Arthur should fall asleep, after which the princess could occupy the place that was allotted her without hazard of detection.

In pursuit of this speculation Ancel proceeds to the cottage. He finds the mother little disposed to engage in this sort of traffic; but Jeannette overpowers all scruples by a torrent of argument, which may have been satisfactory to herself on the score of her future intentions, but certainly possessed very little plausibility for the conviction of others.

The nuptials of Arthur and Perona are solemnized, and Jeannette performs the part she had chosen. It seems to have been the custom in Britany that on the night after a marriage the husband should present his wife with a ring and act of dowry. Jeannette does not neglect to demand the performance of

this ceremony, hoping that she will thus be entitled to assert claims to Arthur as her husband. Fortified with these credentials, she readily resigns her place to Perona when the opportunity is presented.

Arthur next morning pays a visit to Jeannette, who produces the ring; and at the same time gives him some insight into the character of Perona. This lady is also a good deal nonplused on being asked by the duke to show him the act of dowry. Gouvernau, who had been at the cottage with Arthur on his last visit, reveals the whole story on his return. Jeannette is confronted with the Austrian family, and Perona is utterly disgraced. Lucca leaves the court with her daughter, and when they came to the fields the mother began to lament, and Perona was so much grieved that she died; at which, says the romance, Arthur and his court had great joy, and Jeannette above all the rest.

Now Arthur remained with Jeannette four years in his father's court. At the end of this period he has a dream, in which Florence, his predestined consort, appears to him, and his other adventures are very clearly portrayed by a vision of eagles and griffins. Arthur is induced by this dream to ask leave of his father to travel in quest of his future mistress. This being granted, he sets out with his cousin Hector, son of the Count of Blois, Gouvernau, and a squire.

At this time a king called Emendus reigned in Sorolois, an empire little known in modern geography, but which the romance declares to be situated in the heart of Mesopotamia. This monarch had four vassal kings, who ruled over the uncouth lands of Normal, Valfondeé, &c., and a queen called Fenice, who possessed the contiguous territories of Constantinople and Denmark. On one occasion the royal pair held their court at Corinth, and gave a grand festival to their peers, at which the queen sat on the right hand of the king. It would appear that her majesty had intended to take the liberty of bringing forth in presence of her court, but the king of Yrcania having looked at her, declared she must instantly retire to the place where the king wished her to be confined. A discussion arose at table concerning the most suitable situation. At length it was determined that the castle of



the Black Gate (Porte Noire), lying on the Perilous Mount, guarded by every species of monster, and surrounded by a river, abounding in all sorts of vermin, would be the most commodious spot for the ensuing parturition. Another advantage of this situation was, that the castle belonged to a fairy called Proserpine, who, if duly propitiated, might bestow a number of fine qualities on the infant. The daughter to whom the queen gives birth receives the name of Florence. She is educated with Stephen, son to the king of Valfondeé, and proves, when she grows up, a miracle of beauty.

The great object of Arthur is the quest of this incomparable princess; but he is frequently diverted from his chief design by the enticements held out to him in the destruction of monsters and giants. His exploits, however, principally consist in disenchanting castles, one of which is the Porte Noire, the birth-place of Florence, where an image, holding a hat which it was foredoomed to place on the head of the destined husband of Florence, had been in attendance from time immemorial. But the period of this inauguration was not yet arrived. Arthur had still to encounter

——— fierce faces threatening wars,  
Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise.

In these exploits he is neither assisted by Hector of Blois, whom at the beginning of his career he had married to the countess of Brueil, a lady whom he had freed from her enemies, nor does Gouvernau attend him in many of his expeditions, but experiences separate, though similar, adventures. He is frequently enabled, however, to track Arthur by the carcasses he finds on the roads; and he walked, says the romance, till he saw ten robbers lying slain: then Gouvernau said to Jaquet, My lord has been here (c. 57).

But Arthur occasionally meets with a different species of allurement from that presented in an intercourse with giants and monsters. Proserpine, the protecting fairy of Florence, in order to try his fidelity to her *protegeé*, risks her own honour by throwing herself in his way at the foot of an oak in a forest he was traversing. Nor is this vigilant fairy satisfied with one experiment. She contrives a plot by which Arthur comes to her

palace, where her own blandishments being again resisted, she employs one of her damsels, who is treated with an indifference as satisfactory to Proserpine as provoking to the damsel, who did not feel the same interest as the fairy in this triumph of constancy.

Florence, in the mean time, was exposed to similar difficulties. The emperor of India had demanded her in marriage, and had lately arrived at her father's court to prosecute his suit in person. This alliance was as acceptable to King Emendus as it was disagreeable to the party chiefly interested. Matters, however, having come to a crisis, Florence is obliged to request that the celebration of her nuptials be deferred till a splendid tournament is proclaimed, the fame of which she trusts will lead Arthur to court; for of his approach and attachment she had been apprised by her confidant Stephen, who had met with him at Porte Noire and other places.

Arthur, according to expectation, appears at the tournament, and Florence obtains an interview with him, by the intervention of Stephen, or the Master, as he is generally called.

On the first day of the tournaments Arthur greatly distinguishes himself, and Florence, in order that her lover might not be exhausted with two days continued exertion, feigns sickness on the following morning, and requests that the tournament be delayed. "Aura elle ce meschef," says Emendus, on hearing of the illness of his daughter, "Je serois courroucé si elle se mouroit sans hoir de son corps." (c. 63.) This paternal monarch is conducted to the chamber of Florence by Stephen, who there commences a harangue, which may give some idea of the mode of managing sick princesses in those times. "My lady, God to-day has done you great honour. Never were there so many people assembled by the sickness of a princess as there are to visit you; for here is an emperor, ten kings, thirty dukes, and the whole chivalry of the sovereign of India."

But in this chamber there was something still more important than all this blaze of quality. In a corner of the room stood the image with the hat, which Stephen, who dabbled in magic, had lately smuggled from Porte Noire by a stroke of necromancy. The company assembled are informed that the



person on whom this statue confers the hat will be acknowledged as the husband of Florence. The emperor of India first presents himself, but the image continues motionless. To the vassal kings of Emendus it is equally unpropitious ; till at length Arthur approaching receives the token that was reserved for him.

In spite of this unequivocal demonstration on the part of the image, Emendus still persists in his intention of bestowing his daughter on the emperor of India. This resolution compels Florence to fly to the Porte Noire, accompanied by the kings and knights who were friendly to her cause ; while the fairy Proserpine, who exactly resembled her in figure, occupies her place at court. The imposture, however, being at length detected, Florence is besieged in Porte Noire by her father and the emperor of India with immense armies. During the siege, Proserpine is observed by the latter flying from the castle. As she had assumed the shape of Florence, he overtakes her, and extorts a promise of marriage. Then, having assured her of his protection, he conducts her to Emendus, who, on her entrance, salutes her with his foot. This commentary on her returning obedience not being relished by the emperor, a squabble arises between the monarchs, during which Proserpine disappears, and the emperor soon after retires to his own country.

The night succeeding his departure, Stephen throws the whole army of Emendus into a profound sleep, and then, with the assistance of five knights, conveys the king, while in bed, to Porte Noire. By this trick of legerdemain he is obliged, when he awakes, to give his consent to his daughter's marriage with Arthur. Previous to their union that prince pays a visit to Britany, where he has rather an awkward interview with Jeannette. On his return to Porte Noire, he is accompanied by a number of the peers of France, the duke and duchess, and also Jeannette, whose presence was certainly superfluous. Stephen on the journey informs Arthur, that he had discovered by his books that Florence had left Porte Noire, and was now besieged in the White Tower by the emperor of India, who had returned to the war. Arthur is advised to proceed thither with his host, but he determines on a plan of action more suited

to his impatience, and to his confidence in his own prowess. He presses forward in disguise, followed by three knights, to the White Tower, where he signalizes his arrival by cutting up a whole army, with wounds that exhibit great anatomical variety. His other friends having come up soon after, the gates of the White Tower are purposely left open, and the emperor, thinking it defenceless, enters with the remains of his army, still amounting to fifty thousand men. These are speedily despatched ; the emperor himself is taken prisoner, and soon after dies of grief.

No farther obstacle remaining to the marriage of Arthur, a splendid tournament celebrates the triple nuptials of Arthur with Florence, Gouvernau with Jeannette, and Stephen the Master with Margaret, a princess whom Arthur had reinstated in her kingdom early in the romance.

Florence in due season produces a son, whom the accurate romancer informs us she conceived the night of the espousals. The birth of this child King Emendus solemnizes by dying of joy. Arthur is, of course, crowned king of Sorolois ; he reigned, says the romance, thirty-two years, and left the care of his child, and all that he possessed, to Hector, Gouvernau, and the Master—"et d' autre chose plus rien n' en dict l' histoire, ains elle se tait."

The chief excellence of the romance of Artus de la Bretagne is, that it possesses more unity of design than the works of the same nature by which it was preceded. The story of Jeannette at the beginning is indeed episodic, but it is discussed in fourteen chapters, and through the remainder of the work the adventures relate to one common original, the object that appeared in the dream ; and to one common end, the union of Arthur and Florence. Accordingly, the chief employment of Arthur is the search of Florence, and her deliverance from the power of the emperor ; and though these objects be occasionally lost sight of by the irresistible temptations thrown out by giants or monsters, they are never entirely abandoned. But in Tristan, Meliadus, Perceforest, and the older romances, there is no permanent motive that inspires the action. In them the momentary gratification of passion, an occasional dis-



play of valour, and a concluding paroxysm of devotion, comprise the incidents of the romance.

Neither is there any romance of the Round Table in which so great a war is carried on for the sake of a single woman, as in that just analyzed. We do not behold two knights occasionally tilting for the heart or favours of a lady, but the whole forces of India ranged against the chivalry of France. A single knight, in a paroxysm of valour, overthrows the army of an empire; and though the combats are usually described more circumstantially than intelligibly, the slaughter is always conducted on a magnificent scale, and tends to one purpose.

But though the unity of design in this romance be commendable, the design itself is by no means deserving of applause. Nothing can be more absurd than that Arthur should be enchanted with a woman he had never beheld, desert a beloved mistress, and set out in quest of the unknown fair, in consequence of an obscure vision. There is something, too, extremely cold and hard-hearted in thus abandoning Jeannette, which gives us, at the first, a very unfavourable idea of the character of the hero. Nor, as we advance, do we find him possessed of a single quality, except strength and courage, to excite respect or interest. This remark might, perhaps, be justly extended to all the other characters in the romance, except Stephen, or the Master, as he is called. That young and royal astrologer is painted as endowed with every personal grace and accomplishment—he has endless resources in every emergency—he possesses a delightful frankness and gaiety, united to an invincible heroism; the utmost warmth of friendship for Arthur, and an unshaken fidelity to Florence. He also constantly amuses the reader by raising up delightful gardens, fountains, and singing birds, by the operations of natural magic—a knowledge of which was at one time believed to be a common attainment, and was known in Scotland by the name of *glamour*. The Jongleurs were professors of this mystery; and Sir John Mandeville saw many proficient in the East. In particular, he gives a description of the marvels displayed before the khan of Tartary, so strikingly similar to

those in the romance of Arthur, as to afford a strong presumption that such exhibitions were actually attempted in the middle ages, and were not merely the offspring of the romancer's fancy. "And than comen jogulours and enchantoures that don many marvaylles: for they maken to come in the ayr the sonne and the mone, be seeminge to every man's sight. And after they maken the nyght so derk, that no man may see no thing. And afre they maken the day to come agen fair and plesant, with bright sonne, to every mannes sight. And than they bringen in daunces of the fairest damyselles of the world, and richest arrayed. And after they maken to comen in other damyselles, bringinge coupes of gold, and geven drynke to lordes and to ladyes. And than they make knyghtes to jousten in armes full lustyly; and they breken here speres so rudely, that the tronchouns flen in peces alle aboute the halle. And than they make to come in huntyng for the hert and for the boor, with houndes renning with open mouthe, and many other thinges they don be craft of hir enchauntments that it is marveylye for to see." And elsewhere the traveller remarks, "And wher it be by craft or nygromancye, I wot nere."

It can hardly be doubted that the leading incident of the romance of Arthur of Britany suggested to Spenser the plan and outline of his *Faery Queene*; where Arthur, the hero, sees in a vision, and, seeing, falls in love with the fairy queen, whose quest is the great object through the whole of that romantic poem.

#### CLERIADUS

is the last romance that has been ranked among those of the Round Table. It does not strictly belong to that class of fictions, but has been numbered with them, as a great proportion of the adventures happen in England, and as the hero was married to a princess descended from the great Arthur.

Philippon, king of England, one of the successors of Arthur, being far advanced in life, sent to Spain, in order to request that the count of Asturias, a man renowned for his wisdom, would come to England to assist him



in the government of his kingdom. The count arrived according to invitation, and brought with him his son Cleriadus, who soon became enamoured of Meliadice, the daughter of Philippon. To render himself worthy of her affections, he engaged in many hazardous enterprises both in Britain and in his native country. Among other exploits, he subdued a lion which ravaged all England, but who turned out to be a gallant knight metamorphosed by the malevolence of a fairy; and on one occasion he challenged and overcame all the heroes of the court of Philippon. After this exhibition, Philippon gave a splendid entertainment in honour of Cleriadus, who contributed a *pic-nic* of sparrowhawks and dressed dogs, which seem to have been the delicacies of the time; he also danced for the amusement of the company, and sung a duet with Meliadice by order of the king.

The final happiness of the lovers seemed fast approaching, when ambassadors arrived from the court of Cyprus to beg assistance against the Saracens, who had invaded that island. Though this enterprise was somewhat out of the line of his English majesty's politics, yet in order to testify his zeal for the christian cause, he sent eight hundred men to Cyprus, with Cleriadus at their head, an expedition which may, perhaps, have been suggested to the imagination of the romancer by the circumstance of a king of Cyprus having resided in England during the reign of Edward the Third.

The Queen of England had a brother, Thomas, Count of Langarde, a man of infamous character, who had conceived an incestuous passion for his niece. As his proposals were rejected with horror, he seized the absence of Cleriadus as a fit opportunity for revenge. He forged letters, which he made appear to have passed between Cleriadus and Meliadice, in which the lovers agreed to poison the king, and ascend the throne in his stead. The good monarch, though he seems generally to have dispensed with the trouble of reflection, at first betrayed an inclination for a trial, but at the persuasion of Langarde, Meliadice, without farther ceremony, is sent under the charge of four ruffians to be murdered in a wood. Two of their number, however, are seized with compunction, and persuade their comrades to agree in saving her. She is

accordingly allowed to escape on condition of leaving England, but is previously stripped, that she might not draw observation by the splendour of her dress. Thus she wanders through the country, in a dishabille which was fully as likely to attract attention as her royal vestments. At many gates she was refused admittance, as a person of suspicious character; but at length found refuge in the cottage of an old woman, who gave her clothes, and sent her, with letters of introduction, to a merchant, who lived on the sea-coast, and was speedily to embark for Spain. After a prosperous voyage she was landed at Villablanca, the capital of Asturias, where she entered into service with a female cousin of the merchant.

Meanwhile Cleriadus having conquered the Saracens, returned to England, where he was informed of the death of Meliadice. He also found that his father, having lost all influence, had retired to Asturias, and that the defamer of his mistress was acting as viceroy. He assaulted Langarde next morning, and defied him to single combat; but that traitor preferring the certainty of immediate execution to the risk of a battle, confessed his crime. Philippon, as may be imagined, was inconsolable for the loss of his daughter, but, spite of his entreaties, Cleriadus would not consent to remain in England. He assumed a pilgrim's habit, and embarked on board a vessel which was bound for the Tagus. The ship, however, fortunately encountered a storm on the coast of Gascony, which forced it to enter the port of Villablanca. Although Cleriadus had formally renounced his country, he could not refrain from ascending a hill in the neighbourhood to take a last geographical survey of the abode of his parents.

While ruminating on his misfortunes, a young woman, whom the reader divines to be Meliadice, arrived, bearing a water-pitcher on her head. Seeing him plunged in distress, she attempted to console him, and concluded with offering charity. She persuaded him to disclose the cause of his grief; and while he was yet speaking she recognised her lover, broke her water-pitcher, and threw herself into his arms. The happy couple set off for the seat of the count of Asturias, who, in a few days, accompanied them to England.



There they were legally united with the consent of Philippon, who soon after resigned his crown to Cleriadus.

The above work is the foundation of a Scotch metrical romance, written in the reign of Queen Mary, and entitled *Clariodus*, of which there is a MS. copy in the Advocates Library at Edinburgh.

There exists one other prose romance of the knights of the Round Table,—the history of Giglan (son of Gauvain), and Geoffrey of Mayence; it was translated from the Spanish by Claude Platin, and was printed, according to De Bure, in 1530. I have never seen this romance; but to judge from extracts, it is not scarcer than it deserves to be.

Besides the metrical romances from which the prose compilations above analyzed have been chiefly formed, there are a number of others which existed in MS. in the library of M. de Sainte Palaye. None of them have been printed at full length, but of those which were written by the *Trouveurs* of the north of France, an abridged version has been given in the admirable selection of *Le Grand*. A great proportion of the metrical romances concerning Arthur and his knights was written in the 12th century by Chrestien de Troyes, and many of them were afterwards continued by Huon de Mery. Some of these relate new adventures concerning knights of the Round Table, and others introduce new heroes.

1. One of the most beautiful of these metrical tales is *Erec and Enide*, by Chrestien de Troyes. Erec vanquishes a knight who had insulted an attendant of Queen Geneura at a national hunt. After the battle, Erec discovered on the domains of the person he had conquered, his beautiful niece, called Enide, who resided near her uncle's castle, but had been allowed by him to remain in the utmost poverty. Erec marries this lady, and soon forgets all the duties of chivalry in her embraces; his vassals complain bitterly of his sloth, and Enide rouses him to exertion. Attended by her alone he sets out in quest of adventures, of which a variety are related. One day Erec swoons through fatigue, and Enide readily believes him dead. A baron, whose castle was in the neighbourhood, happens to pass at the time, and Enide is married

to him while her husband is in the fainting fit. A nuptial feast is prepared in the room where Erec lay, but a squabble arising between the baron and his bride, on account of the obstinacy of the latter in refusing to eat, Erec is roused by the noise; and being, it would appear, much refreshed by his swoon, instantly beats out the brains of his rival, and disperses the attendants. As the provisions had by this time cooled, he immediately departs with Enide, and arrives in safety at his own castle, after experiencing a curious adventure in a subterraneous labyrinth, from which he rescued a lady who was there detained by enchantment.

2. *La Charette*, the first part of which was written by Chrestien de Troyes, and the conclusion by Geoffrey de Ligny, relates the early adventures of Lancelot, and the commencement of his amour with Queen Geneura.

3. *The Chevalier au Lion* has been generally attributed to Chrestien de Troyes, but the Abbé de la Rue ascribes it to Wace. This romance must not be confounded with another of the same name, of which *Perceval* is the hero. In the present work Yvain is the principal character, and it has given rise to an old English poem, *Ywain and Gawain*, published by Mr Ritson. A knight at the court of Arthur relates that he had been induced to try the adventure of a fountain, where a dreadful storm was raised by throwing the water on a marble stone, and that the commotion brought to the spot a valiant knight, by whom he had been defeated. Yvain resolves to try this stormy experiment, and the expected combatant appears. Our hero kills this champion, and marries his widow, who resided in a castle in the neighbourhood, and finds that a knight is necessary to defend her territories, and reply to the whirlwinds from the fountain. After remaining some time with his wife, Yvain sets out in quest of new adventures, promising to return in a year. When he had exceeded the appointed time, a damsel on the part of his wife comes unexpectedly to the court of Arthur, and reproaches him with his infidelity. Yvain instantly goes mad, and roams through the country, committing extravagancies, which, it may be remarked, bear much closer resemblance to those of Orlando, than the



transports of Lancelot or Tristan. It is after being cured of this phrenzy that he rescues the lion, which he finds engaged in a perilous combat with a dragon. The grateful animal attends him ever after, and is of great service in all his adventures. Yvain at last thinks of being reconciled to his wife, and begins his overtures towards accommodation, by raising storms from the fountain. The lady, who had resolved against agreement, is shaken by this species of eloquence; as she finds she must either be reconciled to her husband, or pass her life in an eternal hurricane. This notion of a knight having obliged, and being afterwards accompanied by a lion, which is the leading incident in the above tale, seems to be a fiction common to all nations: every one knows the story of the Roman knight, and in the Teutonic romance of the Book of Heroes, written in the beginning of the 13th century, Wolfdietrich having aided a lion in a combat with a dragon, is ever after followed by the grateful quadruped.

There are a great number of fabliaux relating to the knights of Arthur, of which Gauvain is generally the hero, but which also contain a vast deal about Queux, the seneschal of Arthur.

4. In *le Chevalier a l'Epeeé*, erroneously ascribed by some to Chrestien de Troyes, Gauvain is received in a splendid castle, where it was a rule that every person should be put to death who found fault with any thing he saw in the habitation. Owing to a hint he received from a peasant on entering this ceremonious residence, he abstains from all criticism: but he was not aware of a second regulation, that an enchanted sword cut off the head of those who took liberties with the daughter of the Chatelain. On the second night of his stay, the father locks him up in the same chamber with his daughter; but the lady having taken a liking to him, warns him of his danger, and he escapes with a slight wound in the arm. This damsel was afterwards married to Gauvain, and of her is related the example of female infidelity, contrasted with canine attachment, which has been given in the abstract of Tristan.

5. *La Mule sans Frein* has by some been attributed to Paysans Maisiriers, and by others to Chrestien de Troyes. A disconsolate lady,

mounted on a mule without a bridle, comes to the court of Arthur, and requests that one of his knights would go in search of this bridle, declaring, that the mule knew the road to the place where it lay. Queux, the seneschal, offers his services, but speedily returns, appalled by the dangers he encounters. Gauvain then sets out, and after much procedure with giants and monsters, recovers the treasure from the lady's elder sister, who had robbed the younger of it. In the original romance there is not the smallest advantage to be derived from the possession of this bridle; but, in an abstract in the *Bibliothèque des Romans*, it is feigned to procure for the holder the comforts of eternal youth and unfading beauty, which gives a semblance of probability to the contest of these freakish sisters. The tale has been versified by Mr Way, and by the German poet Wieland.

6. The well-known story of *Le Court Mantel*, printed in the 16th century, and analyzed by Le Grand, under the title of *Le Manteau mal Taillé*.

7. History of the adventures of four brothers, Agravain, Gueret, Galheret, and Gauvain, all of whom set out in different directions, in quest of Lancelot du Lac. Agravain, as a *coup d'essai*, kills Druas, a formidable giant, but is in turn vanquished by Sornehan, the brother of the deceased. His life is spared at the request of the conqueror's niece, and he is confined in a dungeon, where his preserver secretly brings him refreshments. Gueret also concludes a variety of adventures, by engaging Sornehan, and being overcome, is shut up in the same dungeon with his brother. Galheret, the third of the fraternity, arrives at a castle, where he is invited to play with its lady at chess, on condition that if he win he is to possess her person and castle, but should otherwise become her slave. The chess men are ranged in compartments on the floor of a fine hall, are large as life, and glitter with gold and diamonds. Each of them besides is a fairy, and moves on being touched by a talisman. Galheret loses the game, and is confined with a number of other check-mated knights. Gauvain, however, soon after arrives, and vanquishes the lady at her own arms; but only asks the freedom of the pri-



soners, among whom he finds his brother. Having learned from an elvish attendant of the lady, the fate of his two other kinsmen, he equips himself in the array of the chess king. In this garb he engages Sornehan, who, being dazzled by the brightness of his attire, is easily conquered, by which means Agravain and Gueret are delivered from confinement.

This story is told, with little variation, in the prose romance of Lancelot du Lac, to which it was probably transferred from the metrical tale above-mentioned.

An account has now been presented of the romances of the Round Table, the most ancient class of chivalrous composition. Of the usual tone of incident in these works, I trust the reader may have formed some idea from the abstracts already given. In many of those points that have been laid down, as constituting excellence in the materials of fictitious narrative, they will be found extremely defective. The novelty of adventure is not great, as most of the events related were drawn from those metrical romances, by which the prose ones were preceded. But, if we at one view consider the originals and imitations, the incidents are of such a nature as were never before presented in combination to the world, and form in every particular a complete contrast to the Greek romances. As the fictions concerning the Round Table, in common with all other tales of chivalry, are full of stories of giants and enchanters, they have no claim to probability of incident in one sense of the term, and even that species of verisimilitude, which we expect in the actions and machinations of unearthly beings, is more often violated than preserved.

A modern reader, too, is shocked by the glaring anachronisms and geographical blunders which deform the romances of chivalry. These and other absurdities have been happily ridiculed by Butler in his *Hudibras* :—

Some writers make all ladies purloined,  
And knights pursuing in a whirlwind ;  
Others make all their knights in fits  
Of jealousy to lose their wits ;  
Some force whole regions in despite  
Of geography, to change their site,  
Make former times shake hands with latter,  
And that which was before come after.

The story is invariably told in the person

of the author, and in this the writers of romance have perhaps acted judiciously. As the exploits of so many knights were to be related, it would not have suited to put the account of them in the mouth of the principal character, as he could not be minutely acquainted with adventures, in which, for the most part, he had no concurrence. The story is never carried on, as in the Greek romances, in the form of an epic poem, commencing in the middle of the action, but truly begins with the egg of Leda—the adventures of the father or grandsire of the hero. After being protracted through a period of twenty or thirty years, the romance concludes with the death of the principal character, or his retirement into a hermitage ; or drags us through a long list of descendants. The interest, also, is too much divided, and the part of the titular hero is not always the most considerable. He appears and vanishes like a spirit, and we lose sight of him too soon to regard him as the most important character in the work. In the Greek romances, all the adventures accelerate or impede the solution of the fable ; but in the tales of chivalry there is a total want of unity of design, which prevents our carrying on the story in our mind, and distracts the attention. Indeed, I believe that in the metrical romances, and those few that were originally written in prose, the author had no idea where he was to stop ; he had formed no skeleton of the story, nor proposed to himself a conclusion to which his insulated adventures should lead.

With respect to those excellencies which have been termed the ornaments of fictitious narrative : the *characters* of the heroes are not well shaded nor distinguished. The knight, however, is always more interesting than the heroine, which must appear strange when we reflect that these romances were composed in an age when devotion to the ladies formed the essence of chivalry, and that it is quite the reverse in the Greek romances, though, at the time in which they were written, women acted a very inferior part in society. In the romance of Perceval, he appears a great deal, and Blanchefleur very little. Some romances, as *Meliadus*, have no heroine at all, and the mistresses of Lancelot and Tristan are women of abandoned character.



In all these works the *sentiments* are thinly scattered, and perhaps a greater number would not have been appropriate in that species of composition. During the chivalrous ages, as Madame de Staël has well remarked, “L’honneur et l’amour agissoient sur le coeur de l’homme comme la fatalité chez les anciens, sans qu’on réfléchit aux motifs des actions, ni que l’incertitude y fut admise.”

The charm of style and beauty of description form the most pleasing features of the romances of chivalry. There is something in the simplicity of the old French tongue which surpasses that of all other nations, and, from an assiduous perusal of romances, where it is exhibited in its greatest richness and beauty, we may receive much additional insight into the etymology of our own language.

M. de Sainte Palaye talks in high terms of the light which these works are calculated to throw on the labours of the genealogist, and of the information which they afford with regard to the progress of arts among our ancestors. That writer was an enthusiast for this species of lore; and, like other enthusiasts, was disposed to exaggerate its importance and value. It may indeed be granted, that the romances of chivalry are curious as a picture of manners, and interesting as efforts of the imagination, in a certain stage of the progress of the human mind; but with this exception, and the pleasure occasionally afforded by the *naïveté* of the language, the most insipid ro-

mance of the present day equals them as a fund of amusement, and is not much inferior to them as a source of instruction.

Those, too, who have been accustomed to associate the highest purity of morals with the manners of chivalry, will be greatly deceived. Indeed, in their moral tendency, many of the romances are highly reprehensible. In some, as Perceforest, particular passages are exceptionable, and the general scope in others, where the principal character is a knight, engaged, with the approbation of all, in a love intrigue with the wife of his friend or his sovereign. In one of the best of these romances, Tristan carries on an amour through the whole work with the queen of his benefactor and uncle. I need not mention the gallantries of Lancelot and Geneura, nor the cold hard-hearted infidelity of Artus de la Bretagne. “The whole pleasure of these bookes,” says Ascham, with some truth and *naïveté*, “standeth in two specyall poyntes, in open manslaughter and bolde bawdrie, in which bookes those be counted the noblest knights that doe kill most men without any quarrell, and commit foulest adoulteries by sutlest shifts, as Syr Launcelott with the wife of Kyng Arthure his maister; Syr Tristram with the wife of Kyng Marke his vnclé; Syr Lamerocke with the wife of Kyng Lote, that was his own aunte. This is good stuffe for wise men to laugh at, or honest men to take pleasure at.”

## CHAPTER IV.

Romances of Chivalry relating to Charlemagne and his Peers—Chronicle of Turpin—Huon de Bordeaux—Guerin de Monglave—Gallien Rhetoré—Milles et Amys—Jourdain de Blaves—Ogier le Danois, &c.

It was formerly shown that the romances relating to Arthur and the knights of the Round Table were in a great measure derived from the History of Geoffrey of Monmouth. It now remains for us to investigate what influence the chronicle falsely attributed to Turpin, or Tilpin, archbishop of Rheims, the contemporary of Charlemagne, exercised over

the fabulous stories concerning that prince and his paladins.

The chronicle of Turpin is feigned to be addressed from Viennes, in Dauphiny, to Leoprandus, dean of Aquisgranensis (Aix la Chapelle), but was not written, in fact, till the end of the 11th or beginning of the 12th century. Its real author seems not



to be clearly ascertained, but is supposed by some to have been a Canon of Barcelona, who attributed his work to Turpin.

This production, it is well known, turns on the expedition of Charlemagne to the peninsula. Some French writers have denied that Charlemagne ever was in Spain, but the authority of Eginhart is sufficient to establish the fact. It seems certain, that about the year 777, the assistance of Charlemagne was invoked by one of those numerous sovereigns, among whom the Spanish provinces were at that time divided; that, on pretence of defending this ally from the aggressions of his neighbours, he extended his conquests over a great part of Navarre and Arragon; and, finally, that on his return to France he experienced a partial defeat from the treacherous attack of an unexpected enemy. These simple events have given rise to the famous battle of Roncesvalles, and the other extravagant fictions recorded in the chronicle of Turpin.

Charlemagne, according to that work, having conquered Britain, Italy, Germany, and many other countries, proposed to give himself some repose, though the Saracens were not yet extirpated; but while in this frame of mind, being fortunately addicted to star-gazing, he one night perceived a cluster of stars,<sup>1</sup> which, commencing their procession at the Frisian sea, moved by way of Germany and France into Galicia. This phenomenon being repeated, attracted the thoughts of Charles, but he could form no rational conjecture as to what was portended. The prodigy, which eluded the waking researches of the monarch, was satisfactorily expounded in a vision. A figure appeared to Charles while he was asleep, introduced itself as the apostle James, and announced that the planetary march typified the conquest of Spain, adding, that he had himself been slain by King Herod, and that his body had long lain concealed in Galicia. Hence, continued he, I am astonished that you have not delivered *my* land from the yoke of the Saracens. The apostle's appropriation of territory was somewhat whimsical, but Charles did not dispute his title. This prince,

however, seems not to have been renowned for a retentive memory, and accordingly the apostle took the precaution, on the following night, of renewing his suggestion.

In consequence of these successive admonitions, Charles entered Spain with a large army, and invested Pampeluna. He lay three months before this town, but could not take it; because, says the chronicle, it was impregnable. At the end of this period, however, he be-thought himself of prayer, on which the walls followed the example of their tottering prototypes of Jericho. The Saracens who chose to embrace Christianity were spared, but those who persisted in infidelity were put to the sword. Charles then paid his respects to the sarcophagus of James, and Turpin had the satisfaction of baptising a great proportion of the Galicians in the neighbourhood.

The main object with this bishop and his master was to destroy all the idols which could be discovered; an undertaking which, among a people who abominate idolatry, must have required a very patient research. At length these images were completely extirpated, except an obstinate mawmet at Cadiz, which could not be broken, because it was inhabited by a cluster of demons.

After this Charles founded a number of churches, and endowed them with much wealth; grants which were afterwards reclaimed with great zeal by a successor, who boasted him as a prototype.

Charles had scarcely returned to France, when a strenuous pagan, named Aigolandus, recovered the whole country, which obliged the French monarch to return with great armies, of which he gave the command to Milo, the father of Orlando.

While these troops were lying at Bayonne, a soldier, named Romaricus, died, after having ordered one of his relations to sell his horse, and distribute the price among the clergy and the poor. His kinsman sold the horse, but spent the money in carousing. After thirty days the deceased, who had been detained that time in purgatory, appeared in a dream, up-braided his faithless executor for the misapplication of the alms, and notified to him that he might depend on being in Tartarus in the course of the following day. While reporting this uncomfortable assurance next morning

<sup>1</sup> "Intentione sagaci," says Eginhart, "siderum cursum curiosissime rimabatur." (C. 25.)



to his fellow soldiers, he is hurried off by a flight of demons, and dashed against a rock as a preliminary to subsequent punishment.

After this there follows a long account of the war with Aigolandus, which was first carried on by two hundred, or two thousand, soldiers, on one part, engaging an equal number of the enemy; but at length a general battle was fought, in which were slain *forty thousand* Christians, Milo the commander of the forces, and the horse of Charles. Next day, however, the French having been reinforced by *four thousand* men from the coast of Italy, Aigolandus fled to a different part of the peninsula, and Charles departed for France.

Aigolandus now carried the war into Gascony, followed by the Moabites, Ethiopians, Parthians, and Africans. At Sanctona (Xantonge), previous to a great battle, certain Christians having fixed their spears in the ground towards night, found them decorated next morning with leaves, which signified to the proprietors of these warlike instruments that they were about to obtain the crown of martyrdom. Aigolandus was defeated in the battle with the loss of four thousand of his troops, and fled to Pampeluna. Thither he was followed by Charles, and an army of a hundred and thirty-four thousand men. On this occasion the reader is presented with a list of the chief warriors, among whom are mentioned the names of Orlando, Rinaldo, Oliviero, and Gano. Charles having arrived at Pampeluna, received a message from Aigolandus, requesting a truce till his army should come forth fully prepared for war.

This being granted, Aigolandus in the interval paid a visit to Charles, and was much astonished to hear himself attacked as an usurper in the Arabic tongue, which Charles had learned at Coletus (Thoulouse). Aigolandus expostulated, that his competitor had no right either in his own person, or derived from his ancestors, to the throne of Spain; but Charles replied, that the country must be conquered for the extension of the christian religion. This brought on a theological dispute between the two sovereigns, which terminated in a resolution to fight on the following day, with a hundred soldiers against a hundred, and a thousand against a thousand: but Aigolandus being ultimately vanquished in

this singular species of warfare, agreed to be baptized with his people. For this purpose he came to Charles next day, and found that monarch carousing, while thirteen naked beggars were sitting on the ground looking on the feast. The malapert heathen asked who these were. Charles replied, rather unfortunately, that they were the people of God whom he was feeding, and that they represented the apostles. Aigolandus thereupon notified that he would have nothing to do with such a faith.

Next day a pitched battle was fought, in which Aigolandus having only a hundred thousand troops, and his enemy a superiority of thirty-four thousand, was entirely defeated, and was himself slain, which demonstrated the propriety of the mode which Charles had adopted of entertaining the representatives of the apostles.

The French monarch next carried on a war against Furra, a prince of Navarre. On the approach of a battle, he prayed that the sign of the cross might appear on the shoulder of those who were predestined to perish in the action. In order to evade the decrees of Providence, Charles shut up the soldiers who had been marked in consequence of this application, in his oratory; but on returning from the battle, in which he vanquished the enemy, he found that all those he had in ward were dead, to the number of a hundred and fifty, which evinced the impiety of his precaution.

While in Navarre, it is reported to Charles that a Syrian giant of first-rate enormity, called Ferracutus (the Ferrau of the Italians), had appeared at Nagera. This creature possessed most exuberant proportions: he was twelve cubits high, his face was a cubit in length, and his nose a measured palm. As soon as Charles arrived at Nagera, this unwieldy gentleman proposed a single combat, but the king was so little tempted by a personal survey, that he declined his offer. Ogerius the Dane was therefore selected as the christian champion, but the giant trussing him under one arm, carried him off to the town. Having served a succession of knights in a similar manner, Orlando at length went out against him. The Saracen, as usual, commenced the attack by pulling his anta-



gonist from the saddle, and rode off with him, till Orlando, exerting all his force, seized him by the chin, and both fell to the ground. When they had remounted, the knight thinking to kill the pagan, only cut off the head of his horse. Ferrau being now on foot, Orlando struck a blow on his arm that knocked the sword from his hand; on which the giant slew his adversary's horse with a pat of his fist. After this the opponents fought on foot, and with swords, till towards evening, when Ferrau demanded a truce till next day.

In the morning Orlando had recourse to a new sort of implement; he attacked his enemy with an immense club, which had no more effect than the finer weapon. The champions now assaulted each other with stones; but when this species of warfare was at the hardest, giants being naturally prone to somnolency, Ferrau became overpowered with sleep, and again begged a truce. When he had composed himself to rest, his courteous antagonist placed a stone below his head, that he might sleep more softly. When he awoke, Orlando took an opportunity of asking him how he was so hardy, that he neither dreaded sword nor batoon. The giant, who must have been more remarkable for strength than caution, explained the whole mystery, by acknowledging that he was every where invulnerable except in the navel. Ferrau, in his turn, made less pertinent inquiries concerning the name, lineage, and faith of his foe. This last subject being started, Orlando, hoping to make a convert, explained the articles of his creed. The giant opened the controversy by questioning the possibility of three being one, but Orlando vanquished his arithmetical scruples by a number of ingenious illustrations; as that an almond is a single nut, though it consists of three things, the husk, the shell, and the kernel. The disputant replied, that he had now a very clear conception how three made one, but that he was scandalized at a virgin producing. Orlando reminded him that there was nothing more remarkable in this, than in the original creation of Adam. Our giant readily waved this point, but could not comprehend how a God could die. The arguments on this head he seems to have been as little prepared to canvass as the

other topics, but entrenched himself within what he considered his last stronghold, that the God who died could not come alive again. It was argued by Orlando, that there was nothing impossible in this, as Elijah and Elisha readily revived after their death, and that the dead cubs of a lioness can be resuscitated on the third day, by the breath of the mother. Orlando must, no doubt, have expected, that the ingenuity of this last illustration would have completed the work of conversion; what then must have been his disappointment, when the pertinacious Saracen, by demanding that a sword should be admitted into the conference, proved that his head was as impenetrable to argument as his body to the incomparable edge of Durindana. In the ensuing combat, Orlando made great use of the information he had received concerning the perforable part of his antagonist, who being slain in consequence, the city of Nagera surrendered to the arms of Charlemagne.

After this success, the French monarch received intelligence that Ebraim, king of Sibilis (Seville), who had escaped from the battle before Pampeluna, was encamped at Cordova, ready to resist his invasion. Charles, without loss of time, marched to the south of Spain. When the French vanguard approached the enemy, it found that the troops of the hostile army wore bearded masks, that they had added horns to their heads, and that each soldier held a drum in his hand, which he beat with prodigious violence. The horses, quite unaccustomed to this sort of masquerade, immediately took fright, and spread considerable confusion in the christian army, which with difficulty retreated to an eminence. Next day, however, previous to an attack, Charles ordered his horses to be hood-winked, and their ears to be stopped with wax. This stratagem, or *ars mirabilis*, as it is called in the chronicle, rendered useless the martial prelude of the enemy, and gained Charles the victory. A similar device is resorted to, on a like occasion, in the metrical romance of Richard Cœur de Lion, by the English monarch.

The capture of Cordova was the immediate fruit of the success of Charlemagne, and Spain being now entirely subdued, the conqueror made a proper partition of the kingdom. He



bestowed Navarre on the Britons, Castille on the French, and Arragon on the Greeks, while Andalusia and Portugal were assigned to the Flemings.

After the account of this distribution, the historian most seasonably introduces a description of the person of his hero, and the capacities of his stomach. As to his external appearance, he had dark hair, a ruddy countenance, a stern aspect, but a graceful and elegant form. This, indeed, appears from his dimensions, for his legs were thick, his altitude eight feet, and his belly protuberant. His daily consumption of provisions, though almost incredible, scarcely exceeds that of Lewis XIV., of whose diet an account has been served up in the Walpoliana. During night, Charles was guarded by a hundred and twenty of the orthodox, who relieved each other during three watches, ten being placed at his head, ten at his feet, and the same number on either side, each holding a naked falchion in one hand and a burning torch in the other.

When Charles had arrived as far as Pampeluna on his return to France, he bethought himself that he had yet left in Spain two Saracen kings, Marsirius (the same who in Ariosto is present at the siege of Paris by Agramante), and his brother Beligandus, who reigned jointly at Cæsaraugusta (Saragossa). To these miscreants he despatched Gannalon (the Gan Traditor of Italian poets) to expatiate on the necessity of their paying tribute and receiving baptism. They sent Charles a quantity of sweet wine and a thousand houris, but at the same time bribed the ambassador to betray his master. Gannalon, on his return to head-quarters, reported that Marsirius was well disposed to become a Christian and to pay tribute. Trusting to this information, Charles made a disposition on his march to France, by which he lost the half of his army. He himself passed the Pyrenees in safety with part of his troops; but the second

division, commanded by Orlando, consisting of 20,000 men, was unexpectedly attacked in the defiles of Roncesvalles, by a guerilla of 50,000 Saracens, and was cut to pieces, except Orlando and a few knights.<sup>1</sup>

The main body of the pagans having retired, Orlando discovered a stray Saracen, whom he bound to a tree. After this exploit he ascended an eminence, and sounded his ivory horn, which rallied around him a hundred Christians, the remains of his army. Though the pagans had, with little loss to themselves, reduced his soldiers from 20,000 to 100, Orlando by no means despaired of discomfitting the host of his enemy. He returned with his small band to the Saracen he had put in durance, and threatened to kill him unless he would show him Marsirius. The Saracen yielded to so powerful an argument, and pointed out his king, who was distinguished by his bay horse and round shield. Orlando rushed among the pagans and slew their monarch, which induced Beligandus to fall back with his army on Saragossa. In this brilliant enterprise the hundred Christians were killed, and their commander severely wounded. Wandering through a forest, Orlando arrived alone at the entrance to the pass of Cisera, where, exhausted with wounds, and grieving for the loss of his army, he threw himself under a tree. As a refreshment, he commenced a long address to his sword Durindana, which he complimented with all the superlatives in the Latin language—"Fortitudine firmissime, capulo eburneo candidissime, cruce aurea splendidissime," &c. &c.

The dying champion next blew his horn with such force that he burst it.<sup>2</sup> Charles, who was then in Gascony, heard the peal distinctly, and wished to return to the succour of his nephew, but was persuaded by Gannalon that he could be in no danger, and that he was merely taking the diversion of hunting in the forests. The blast, however, brought

<sup>1</sup> The valley of Roncesvalles, where this catastrophe is supposed to have happened, lies to the north-east of Pampeluna. It extends to St Jean Pied de Porte in Basse Navarre, and receives its name from the mountain of Roncesvalles, which terminates this plain, and is accounted the highest of the Pyrenees.

<sup>2</sup> This horn has been of infinite service to future poets and romancers. Logystilla, in the Orlando

Furioso (c. 15), bestows it on Astolpho, and Prince Arthur's squire is furnished with a similar one by Spenser. The notion probably came to Turpin from Simeon Seth's Life of Alexander, where that monarch gives his war signal by a horn of immense power. All these have perhaps been derived from the horn of Alecto, in the 7th book of the Æneid.



to him Theodoricus, the only surviving knight. Orlando had received the sacrament that morning, and had confessed himself to certain priests, which this learned chronicle informs us was the universal custom of knights before proceeding to battle. Nothing, therefore, remained for the hero but to make a long prayer before he expired.

At this very moment Turpin was standing by King Charles saying mass for the souls of certain persons lately deceased, and informs the reader, that while thus employed, he heard the songs of the angels who were conveying Orlando to Heaven. At the same time a phalanx of demons passed before the archbishop, and notified that they were so far on their way to Gehenna with the soul of one Marsirius, but that Michael, with an angel crowd, was conveying the trumpeter aloft (*Tubicinem virum cum multis Michael fert ad superna*). As no person could doubt the accuracy of these respectable deponents, Turpin announced to Charles the death of his nephew. Charles immediately returned to Roncesvalles, where he uttered a learned lamentation over the remains of Orlando, whom he compared to Sampson, Saul, Jonathan, and Judas Macabees, and then embalmed the body with balsam, myrrh, and aloes.

Charles now thought of taking vengeance on the heathen, as an incitement to which the sun held out to him the same encouragement it had formerly done to Joshua. By this means he came up with the Saracens, while yet reposing on the banks of the Ebro in the neighbourhood of Saragossa. Of them he killed four thousand, a favourite number with this historian, and then returned to Roncesvalles. Here he instituted an inquiry into the conduct of Gannalon, and the champion of that traitor having been slain in single combat, he was tied to the four most ferocious horses in the army, and thus torn to pieces.

<sup>1</sup> The origin and incidents of this expedition of Charlemagne are told in a totally different manner by the Spanish historians. They assert that Charlemagne was called into Spain by Alphonso, king of Leon, on a promise to nominate him as a successor if he would assist in the expulsion of the Moors. Charlemagne was successful in his efforts against the infidels, but the nobles and chieftains of Alphonso disapproving of the ulterior part of their sovereign's compact, supported by Bernardo del Carpio, and at length by their own monarch, attacked and cut to

There is next related the manner in which the Christians preserved the bodies of their friends, and the final interment of each species of mummy.<sup>1</sup>

The emperor having returned to Paris, St Denis informed him in a dream, that all those who had fallen in Spain had their sins forgiven; and at the same time took the opportunity of mentioning that a similar mercy would be extended to those who gave money for building his church. Those who contributed willingly were freed from all servitude, whence the name of Gaul was changed into France.

Charles had been much debilitated by his campaign in the peninsula. For the sake of the warm baths he repaired to Leodio (Liege), where he built a palace, in which was painted the story of his wars in Spain. Now it fell out that one day, while Turpin, who resided at Viennes, was officiating before the altar, an host of demons, who seem to be the news-mongers in this history, passed before him with unusual velocity. Having interrogated one of these, who resembled an Ethiopian, and was lagging behind the rest, he was advertised that they were all going to attend at the death of Charles, and hurry his soul to Tartarus. Turpin requested that, having despatched their errand, they would return with the earliest intelligence. The fiends were faithful to their appointment, but were reduced to the mortifying acknowledgment that a Galician, without a head, having weighed the sins and merits of Charles, had deprived them of their expected prize, and conveyed the soul in a quite contrary direction from what they had intended. In fifteen days after, a special messenger or express arrived at Viennes, who confirmed the deposition of the demons as to the death of Charles, a loss which could have excited no surprise, as the sun and moon had prepared the minds of his

pieces an immense army, with which the French emperor had encamped on the plain of Roncesvalles. The incidents are represented in a similar manner in the Spanish romantic poems. In the Orlando of Nicholas Espinosa, *Con el verdadero successo de la famosa Batalla de Roncesvalles*, published 1557, Bernardo del Carpio stifles Orlando to death, and the poet declares,

Cantera la verdad aquesta historia,  
Y no segun Turpin Frances lo sientè.



subjects for the event, by assuming a black colour for six days preceding his decease. Besides, his name was spontaneously effaced from a church; and a wooden bridge over the Rhine, which took six years to build, had been recently consumed by internal fire.

Turpin concludes his history with a remark, which seems to be intended as the moral of the whole work, that he who builds a church on earth cannot fail of obtaining a palace in Heaven.

I have given this minute analysis of the absurd chronicle of Turpin in deference to the common opinion, that it had a remarkable influence on the early romances relating to Charlemagne, and thence on the splendid monuments of human genius that have been erected by the Italian poets.

It must, however, be remarked, that there are few incidents in this work which breathe the spirit of romantic fiction. There are no castles nor dragons, no amorous knights, and no distressed damsels. The chronicle is occupied with wars on an extensive scale, and with the theological controversies of chiefs in the Saracen and Christian armies. Indeed the campaign of Charlemagne seems to have been chiefly formed on the model of the wars of Joshua. Jericho and Pampeluna fall in the same manner into the hands of the besiegers: the stratagem of Marsirius resembles that of the Gibeonites, and the victors divide the conquered lands in a similar manner among their followers. Many wonders, it is true, are related in the chronicle of Turpin, but they more resemble the miracles of the monkish legends than the beautiful fables that decorate romance. These fictions, according to the principles already established, must have flowed from other sources, though the historical materials to be found in some of the romances of Charlemagne may have been derived from the chronicle. It has been much doubted whether the Italian poets consulted the original Turpin. Ariosto quotes him for stories of which he does not say a single word, and which are the most absurd and incredible in his poem; as Voltaire, subsequently, in the *Pucelle d'Orleans*, laid the *onus probandi* on the Abbé Tritheme. Thus in the *Orlando Furioso*,

Scrive Turpino, come furo ai Passi  
Dell'alto Atlante, che i cavalli loro  
Tutti in un punto diventaron Sassi.—C. 44.

Boiardo, whose *Orlando Innamorato*, in its original form, is the most serious of the romantic poems of Italy, jocularly calls the chronicle of Turpin his *True History*, as Cervantes terms his feigned authorities,

La vera Historia di Turpin ragiona  
Che regnava in la terra d'Oriente, &c.

The incidents in the *Morgante Maggiore* of Pulci are those which approach nearest to the chronicle, yet Crescimbeni has asserted that it was never seen by that father of romantic poetry.<sup>1</sup> The conclusion of the *Morgante*, however, seems almost copied from Turpin. Gano is there sent ambassador to King Marsilio to negotiate a treaty: he treacherously writes that this king is ready to pay tribute, and requests Charlemagne to send his paladins to Roncesvalles to receive it. There they are attacked by the Saracens. Orlando sounded his horn, but Gano at first persuaded Charles that he was hunting. At the third blast, however, the king proceeded to Spain, but Orlando was dead before his arrival. He then besieged and took Saragossa; and, after the return to France, Gano was pulled to pieces by four horses. These circumstances bear a stronger resemblance to the chronicle of Turpin than to any intermediate romance, for it is clear that the French romance of *Morgante* is not the original, but a version of the Italian poem.

But whatever may have been its effect on the Italian poems, it is probable, from its wide circulation and great popularity, that the chronicle of Turpin had some influence on the romances of Charlemagne, or at least the metrical tales from which they were immediately formed. The work was very generally read in the 14th century, and was several times translated into French with variations and additions. Of these versions the first is by Michel de Harnes, who lived as early as the time of Philip Augustus, and the next by Gaguin, who was librarian to Charles VIII. There were also a number of French metrical paraphrases, which were nearly coeval with the original chronicle.

<sup>1</sup> Luigi Pulci spesso volta la cita piu per giuoco, crediam noi, che perche egli l'avesse veduta.



In the reign of St Louis there appeared a romance in verse on the exploits of Charlemagne by an unknown author, which chiefly relates to the wars of that monarch with the Saxons, and their celebrated chief Guitichens (Witikend).

About the time of Philip the Hardy, Girard, or Girardin, of Amiens, composed a metrical romance on the actions of Charlemagne, divided into three books. Of these the first gives an account of an early expedition of Charles, under the name of Mainé, into Aragon, to assist Galafre, a Saracen, whose daughter he marries after vanquishing her father's enemies; a story which, in a much later romance, is told of Charles Martel. The second book contains his wars in Italy against Didier, king of the Lombards, and differs little from what is contained in the authentic histories relating to Charlemagne. The third book is a rhythmical version of the chronicle of Turpin.

Nearly at the same time, in another voluminous metrical romance, an account was given of Charlemagne's preparations for his expedition to the Holy Land, and the adventures of some of his knights who preceded him to that region. Nothing, however, is said of the conquest of Palestine, and indeed the reality of this enterprise is denied by all authentic historians, though it found its way into many of the absurd and fabulous chronicles of the 13th and 14th centuries.

There is another work somewhat resembling the chronicle of Turpin, which, according to the authors of *L'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, was written in 1015, while the Count de Caylus places its composition in the reign of Lewis IX. It is called *Philumena*, a name derived from that of a pretended secretary of Charlemagne, but it was in fact written by a monk of the Abbey de Grasse. It contains an account of the exploits of the emperor against the Moors of Spain, but is more especially devoted to the history and miracles of the abbey, the foundation of which the author attributes to Charlemagne.

In the *Reali di Francia*, an ancient Italian chronicle, we are presented with a fabulous account of the early periods of the French monarchy previous to the age of Charlemagne, the first exploits of that monarch, and the

amours of Milo, father of Orlando, with Bertha, Charlemagne's sister.

There were also many rhythmical French romances on the subject of the *paladins* of Charlemagne. The northern bards, who followed Rollo to France, introduced their native traditions; those, for instance, relating to Ogier the Dane, and other northern heroes, who were afterwards enlisted into the tales of chivalry. The earliest French metrical romances related, as we have seen, to Arthur; but when Normandy had fallen under the dominion of the kings of France, and that country began to look on England with an eye of jealousy, which was the prelude to more open hostility, the native minstrels changed their theme of the praises of the Round Table knights to the more acceptable subject of the paladins of Charlemagne. In the 13th century, Adenez, who was a kind of poet laureat to Henry III., duke of Brabant, wrote the metrical romance, *L'Enfance d'Ogier le Danois*; and about the same period, Huon de Villeneuve produced the still more celebrated compositions of Regnaud de Montauban, Doolin de Mayence, Maugis d'Aigremont, and Quatre fils Aimon.

The ancient chronicles and metrical romances above mentioned, may be considered as sources which supplied with materials the early writers of the prose romances relating to Charlemagne; but though they may have suggested his expedition to Spain and the Holy Land, with several other circumstances, the authors of the prose romances of Charlemagne seem to have written more from fancy, and less slavishly to have followed the metrical tales by which they were preceded, than the compilers of the fables concerning Arthur. They added incidents which were the creatures of their own imagination, and embellished their dreams with the *speciosa miracula*, derived from the fables of Arabia, or from northern and classical mythology. Heroes of romance, besides, are frequently decorated with the attributes belonging to their predecessors or descendants. Many of the events related in the romantic story of Charlemagne are historically true with regard to Charles Martel. When the fame of the latter was eclipsed by the renown of Charlemagne, the songs of the minstrels, and legends of the



monks, transferred the exploits of the Armorican chief to his more illustrious descendant.

Thus, from the ancient chronicles and early metrical romances; from the exploits of individual heroes, concentrated in one; from the embellishments added by the imagination of the author, and the charms of romantic fiction, sprung those formidable compilations we are about to encounter, and which form the second division of Romances of Chivalry.

It is still more difficult to fix the dates of the fabulous tales relating to Charlemagne than of those of the Round Table.

#### HUON DE BOURDEAUX,<sup>1</sup>

though written in verse by Huon de Ville-neuve, as far back as the 13th century, is not, in its present form, supposed to be long anterior to the invention of printing, as there are no manuscripts of it extant. It is said, indeed, at the end of the work, that it was written by desire of Charles Seigneur de Rochfort, and completed on the 29th of January 1454; but it is suspected that the conclusion is of a date somewhat more recent than the first part of the romance. The oldest edition is one in folio, without date, and the second is in quarto, 1516. There are also different impressions in the original language of a more recent period. Huon of Bourdeaux, indeed, seems to have been a favourite romance, not only among the French, but also with other nations. The English translation, executed by Lord Berners in the reign of Henry VIII., has gone through three editions, and it has lately formed the subject of the finest poem in the German language.

As the incidents in the Oberon of Wieland are nearly the same with those in the old French romance, and are universally known through the beautiful translation of Mr Sotheby, it will not be necessary to give so full an analysis of the work as it would be otherwise entitled to, from its antiquity, singularity, and beauty.

Huon, and his brother Girard, while travelling from their own domains of Guyenne to pay homage to Charlemagne, are treacherously way-laid by Charlot, the emperor's son,

who, by the advice of evil counsellors, had formed the design of appropriating their possessions. Having killed, though in self-defence, the favourite son of his sovereign, Huon could not obtain pardon, except on the whimsical condition that he should proceed to the court of the Saracen Amiral, or Emir Gaudisse, who ruled in Bagdad—that he should appear while this potentate was at table—cut off the head of the bashaw who sat at his right hand—kiss his daughter three times, and bring, as a tribute to Charlemagne, a lock of his white beard, and four of his most efficient grinders.

Before setting out on this excursion, Huon proceeds to Rome, where he is advised by his uncle, the pope, to perform a pilgrimage to Palestine, and thence to depart on the remainder of his expedition.

Having complied with this injunction, and visited the holy sepulchre, Huon sets out for the coast of the Red Sea, but wanders in a forest, where he supports himself with wild fruits and honey till the end of the third day, when he meets an old man of gigantic stature, naked, as far as clothes were concerned, but covered with long hair. This *ancien preudhomme*, as he is called, addresses Huon in a dialect of the French language, informs him that his name is Gerasmes, and that he is brother to the mayor of Bourdeaux; he had been made prisoner in a battle with the Saracens, but having escaped from slavery, and possessing much of the *sçavoir vivre*, he had judiciously chosen to reside thirty years in the forest in his present comfortable predicament.

Gerasmes informs Huon that from this wilderness two roads led to the states of Guadissee, one a journey of forty days, the other less tedious, but extremely dangerous, as it passed through the forest inhabited by Oberon, who metamorphosed the knights who were bold enough to trespass, into hobgoblins, and animals of various descriptions.

Our hero having, of course, decided in favour of the most perilous road, he and Gerasmes penetrates into the thickest part of the forest of Oberon. Having followed a path through the wood to a considerable distance, they sit down almost exhausted with famine under an oak. At this hour Oberon, who was apparently

<sup>1</sup> Les prouesses et faicts merveilleux du noble Huon de Bordeaulx, Per de France, Duc de Guyenne.



a child of four years of age, of resplendent beauty, and clothed in a robe sparkling with precious stones, was parading through the forest. The dwarf accosts Huon and his attendants, but, enraged at their silence, raises a frightful tempest. Huon attempts to escape through the thickets, but is soon overtaken by Oberon, who allays the storm, and sounds a magic horn, which throws the attendants of Huon into convulsions of merriment and dancing. Oberon, at length having ceased to blow the horn, enters into conversation with the knight: he commences an account of his own pedigree, and declares that he is the son of Julius Cæsar and a fairy, who was lady of the Hidden Isle, now Chifalonia, in which she had received the Roman chief, when on his voyage to Thessaly to attack Pompey. Many rare endowments had been bestowed on Oberon at his birth, but a malevolent fairy, offended at not being invited to attend on that occasion, had decreed that his stature should not increase after he was three years of age. Oberon farther professed the utmost esteem for Huon and his kindred, as a proof of which he immediately raised up a sumptuous palace for his reception, where he was entertained with a magnificent banquet, at which the fairy presided in great state. After the repast he presented Huon with a goblet, which, in the hands of a good man, spontaneously filled with wine, and also the ivory horn, which, if softly sounded, would make every one dance who was not of irreproachable character, and, if blown with violence, would bring Oberon himself to his assistance, at the head of 100,000 soldiers.

Fortified with these gifts, Huon proceeds on his journey. After travelling a few days, he arrives at the city of Tourmont, which he finds is governed by one of his uncles, who, in his youth, had gone on a penitential pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and having become the slave of the Emir Gaudisse, had been deputed to govern a Saracen city as a reward for renouncing the Christian faith. In this place Huon attracts immediate notice by feasting all the poor of the city out of his enchanted cup. This procures Huon a visit from his apostate uncle, to whom he introduces himself as a nephew, and presents him with the goblet filled with wine; but as his relative was a

person of abandoned character, the liquor instantly disappears. The renegado receives his nephew with apparent kindness, but privately meditates his destruction. He accordingly invites him and Gerasmes to a sumptuous banquet, but orders one of his agas to place guards in the ante-chamber, who should be ready to attack the Christians. This officer was of French birth, and having been befriended in his youth by the father of Huon, he fills the ante-room with Christian prisoners, whom he had set at liberty. Accordingly the traitor's command for an attack on Huon is the signal for a general massacre of the pagans. The emir, however, having escaped, assembles his forces and besieges his nephew, who remained in the palace. Huon, considering this as an occasion sufficiently important to demand the assistance of Oberon, sounds his horn, and while the besiegers are in consequence dancing with prodigious agility, the Christians are reinforced by an army of a hundred thousand men, with the fairy as generalissimo. The governor's troops being immediately cut to pieces, and he himself slain, Huon prepares for his departure. Oberon gives him a last advice concerning his journey, warning him particularly not to approach the tower possessed by Angoulaffre, a cruel giant, who could only be vanquished by a person defended by a certain hauberk, which the monster unfortunately kept in his custody.

To this very tower Huon directs his course, and, entering it while the giant is asleep, he arms himself with the fatal hauberk, awakens the lord of the manor, and kills him by the assistance of a lady, who was confined there, and who finds a kinsman in her deliverer.

Huon follows up this exploit by possessing himself of a ring which had been sent to the giant as a tribute from Gaudisse. Here he dismisses Gerasmes and the rest of his retinue, and having crossed an arm of the Red Sea on the back of Malebron, one of the spirits of Oberon, he at length arrives at Babylon (Bagdad) in Arabia, where that emir held his court.

Having entered the palace, and passed the saloon where the emir was banqueting with a few tributary sultans, Huon suddenly interrupts the pleasures of the entertainment by removing the head of the king of Hyrcania, who was the intended husband of Esclarmonde,



the daughter of Gaudisse, and was then seated at the right hand of her father. He next fulfils the second part of his mission, on the lips of the princess, and concludes with promulgating his designs against the beard and grinders of the emir. This potentate was but ill prepared with an answer to so novel a proposition, and a mode of address somewhat unusual at his board. Huon, however, having produced the ring of Angoulaffre, is at first heard with tolerable patience; but when he mentions how he became possessed of it, the emir orders him to be apprehended. The knight at first defends himself with great courage, and kills many of the assailants, but is at last overpowered by numbers. It was now in vain to have recourse to his horn; at the first gate of the palace, Huon, in order to gain admittance, had professed himself a mussulman, a falsehood which rendered the horn of no avail, since from that moment his character had ceased to be irreproachable. He is loaded with chains and precipitated into a dungeon, where the emir intended he should be tormented with the punishments of hunger and bondage, as preparatory to that of being burned alive, which was in reserve. Huon receives sustenance, however, and many consolatory visits, from the beautiful Esclarmonde, interviews which must have been the more agreeable, as he could not be conscious of any claims to the favour of that princess, farther than having cut off the head of her lover, insulted her father, and knocked out the brains of his body-guards.

After a few tender conversations, Esclarmonde professes her readiness to become a Christian. In many of the romances of Charlemagne, the fable hinges on the assistance given by Saracen princesses to Christian knights, and the treasons practised for their lovers' sake against their fathers or brothers. It must, indeed, be confessed, that they are not of the sex to which the Mahometan religion is most seductive.

When this good understanding had been established, in order to secure Huon against the dangers with which he was threatened, his jailor, who had been bribed by Esclarmonde, informs the emir that his prisoner had died two days ago, and had been interred in the dungeon.

At this period, Gerasmes, whom we left at the tower of Angoulaffre, arrives at Bagdad, and, along with Esclarmonde, plots the deliverance of Huon. The princess had now become so furious a Christian, that she declared to Huon, "*que n'est homme que plus Je hais que l'admiral Gaudisse mon pere, pource qu'il ne croit en nostre seigneur Jhesu Christ.*" Her hatred, indeed, had risen to so high a pitch, that she insisted on her father being murdered in his sleep.—"*A l'heure de minuit Je vous meneray en la chambre de mon pere; vous le trouverez dormant, puis incontinent le occirez: Et quant est a moy, Je vueil bien estre la premiere qui le premier coup luy baillera.*" These plans are aided by the invasion of Agrapard, the brother of Angoulaffre, who enters the capital at the head of a formidable army, reproaches the emir (most unreasonably one should think) for not having avenged the death of that giant, and suggests the alternative of paying a triple tribute or denuding himself of his kingdom.

The emir could find no person at his court who would encounter this champion. After cursing his gods at considerable length, and to no purpose, Esclarmonde embraces this favourable opportunity, to confess that Huon is still in existence. The knight is accordingly brought forth from his dungeon, and the emir promises that if he vanquish Agrapard, he will not only allow his beard to be plucked, but will patiently submit to a partial extraction of his grinders.

Huon, having overcome the giant, proposes to Gaudisse, that, in lieu of the despoliation of his beard and grinders, he should consent to be baptised. This alteration in the agreement not being relished by the emir, he orders Huon to be seized, who, trusting that his long sufferings had now appeased Oberon, sounds the horn with the requisite vehemence. The surmise of the knight is justified by the event; the fairy king appears with a formidable army, and the head of the emir is struck off by an invisible hand. The beard and teeth thus become an easy prey to the conqueror, and are sewed up by Oberon in the side of Gerasmes, who was in attendance. Huon loads two vessels with the treasures of the emir, and sails for Italy with Esclarmonde, after being threatened by Oberon with the



severest punishments, if he should anticipate the delights of matrimony previous to the fulfilment of its graver ceremonies.

In most romances, when a superior being receives a mortal into favour, some test of obedience is required. This is usually violated, and the consequent misfortunes form a series of endless incidents. As to Huon, he seems never to have received any injunction from Oberon, without acting in direct opposition to it. Gerasmes, foreseeing the fate of the lovers, sets sail for France in one of the ships, carrying in his side the precious deposit of beard and grinders. Scarcely had he left the vessel in which Huon and Esclarmonde are conveyed, when their conduct gives rise to a tempest more boisterous than the description of the youngest poet. The ship goes to pieces on a desert island, where the lovers wander about for some time, and renew the offence that had given rise to the late hurricane; but, though on shore, they are not permitted to violate the injunctions of Oberon with impunity. A band of corsairs arriving on the island, one of their number, who had been a subject of the emir Gaudisse, immediately recognises Esclarmonde. These pirates leave Huon in the island, bound to a tree, and, in hopes of a great recompense, sail with the princess for the capital of Yvoirin, emir of Montbrant, and uncle of Esclarmonde. Though Huon was not in the vessel, a tempest drives it to the coast of Anfalerne. The captain having entered one of the ports of that kingdom, Galafre, the ruler of the country, comes on board, and on their refusal to deliver up the princess, puts the whole crew to death, with the exception of one pirate, who escapes to Montbrant. Esclarmonde is conducted to the seraglio, and informed that she must prepare to accept the hand of her new master; but she pretends that she had lately made a vow of chastity for two years, which the emir promises to respect.

Oberon, meanwhile, being touched with pity for the misfortunes of Huon, permits Malebron, one of his spirits, to go to his assistance. This emissary, taking Huon on his back, lands him in the territory of King Yvoirin. As the mercy of the fairy king had not extended so far as to provide the delinquent with victuals or raiment, he wan-

ders naked through the country in quest of provisions. In a meadow he falls in with an old man eating heartily, who had formerly been a minstrel at the court of Gaudisse, and engages Huon to carry his harp and his wallet for food and clothing. On the same evening they arrive at the court of Yvoirin. The minstrel performs in such a manner as to obtain rewards from all the courtiers: his attendant also attracts much notice, and by command of Yvoirin, plays at chess with his daughter, on conditions which show that this emir possessed the greatest confidence in the skill of the princess, or had very little regard to the honour of his family. The lady, who fell in love with Huon during the game, purposely allows herself to be check-mated. But the knight being resolved to preserve his fidelity to Esclarmonde, commutes the stake he had gained for a sum of money,—“*Et la pucelle sen alla moult dolente et courroucée, et dist en elle mesmes, ha mauvais cueur, failly de Mahom soys confondu, car si J' eusse sceu que autre chose n' eusses voulu faire Je te eusse matté, si en eusses eu le chief tranché.*”

Yvoirin, long before this time, had been informed of the detention of his niece by Galafre. He had accordingly sent to demand the restitution of Esclarmonde, which being refused, hostilities had commenced between these neighbouring Sultans. The day after the arrival of Huon at the court of Yvoirin had been fixed for an invasion of the enemy's territories. Huon having learned the cause of the war, feels every motive for exertion: he procures some rusty arms, mounts an old hackney, and, though thus accoutred, his valour chiefly contributes to the defeat of Galafre.

A new resource, however, presents itself to the vanquished monarch. It will be recollected that Gerasmes had left Huon at a most momentous crisis, and the lover had rendered himself culpable so soon after the departure of his friend, that the ship in which Gerasmes was embarked had experienced the full force of the tempest which wrecked the vessel of Huon and Esclarmonde. He had, in consequence, been driven out of his course, and, after being long tempest-tost, had sought shelter in the port of Anfalerne. To Gerasmes the king communicates the situation of his



affairs, and proposes that he should defy a champion of the army of Yvoirin. Gerasmes having consented to this, goes out from Anfalerne with a few Christian friends, and, in a short time, finds himself engaged with Huon of Bordeaux. Having recognised each other in the course of the combat, Gerasmes, with great presence of mind, proposes that they should unite their arms, and defeat the miscreants. The small band of Christians makes a prodigious slaughter in the Saracen army, and pushing on at full speed, gets possession of the capital of Galafre.

That prince, who seems to have been no less remarkable for rapidity of conception than the Christians, joins the remains of his forces to those of Yvoirin, and begs him to lead them on against Huon, to recover his capital. Galafre is as unsuccessful in the coalition as he was singly. The allied army is totally repulsed in an attack upon the city, and Esclarmonde being now delivered from her captivity in the seraglio, the Christians possess themselves of the treasure of Galafre, and embark on board a vessel in which the mayor of Bourdeaux, with more good fortune than probability, had arrived during the siege. Huon is landed safe in Italy, and is formally united to Esclarmonde at Rome; but, on his road to the court of Charlemagne, he is way-laid by his brother Girard, who had possessed himself of his dukedom, and was ruling over it with unexampled tyranny. The usurper pays his brother an apparently kind visit at the abbey of St Maurice, where he lodged a few days on his journey to Paris. Having learned from Huon the secret of the treasure contained in the side of Gerasmes, he attacks the bearer on his way from the monastery, opens his side, takes out the beard and grinders, and sends him along with his master and Esclarmonde in chains to Bourdeaux. The traitor then proceeds to Paris, informs Charlemagne that his brother had not accomplished the object of his mission, and asks a gift of his dukedom. Charlemagne repairs to Bourdeaux, where Huon is tried by the peers, and after much deliberation he is finally condemned by the voice of the emperor. Huon and Gerasmes are sentenced to be drawn and quartered, and Esclarmonde to be led to the stake. Charlemagne defers the execution till

mid-day, that while seated at dinner he may feast his eyes with the punishment of the destroyer of his son. The spectacle is about to commence, when suddenly the gates of the hall in which the emperor was seated, are seized by a formidable army. A splendid table is prepared, and elevated above the sovereign's. Oberon enters the hall to the sound of trumpets and cymbals. The chains drop from the prisoners, and they are arrayed in splendid vestments. Oberon reproaches Charlemagne with injustice, and threatens him with the disclosure of his most secret crimes. He concludes with producing the spoils of the emir, and delivering up Girard to the punishment that had been destined for Huon. The fairy then retires with the same solemnity with which he had entered, after inviting Huon and Esclarmonde to pay him their respects in his enchanted dominions.

The story of Huon of Bourdeaux is here completely finished, but there is a long continuation which seems to be by a different hand, and is apparently of a much later date than the work of which an abstract has been given. In the original romance, Huon begins his exploits by slaying the son of Charlemagne. He recommences his career in this second production by cutting off the head of the son of Thiery, emperor of Germany. That monarch in revenge carries war into the states of Guienne. Huon defends himself successfully for some time, but at length sets out for the east, to beg assistance from the brother of Esclarmonde, to whom, though he had slain his father and seduced his sister, he thought himself entitled to apply.

During his absence Bourdeaux is taken, Gerasmes killed, and Esclarmonde conducted captive to the German court, where she is persecuted with love propositions by the emperor.

While on his voyage to Asia, Huon experiences a tremendous storm. When the tempest has abated, the vessel is carried away by a rapid and irresistible current, which draws it into a dangerous whirlpool. Huon perceiving a man swimming in the midst of the waters, and hearing him utter deep lamentations, orders the seamen to slack sails in order to gratify his curiosity. The swimmer proclaims himself to be Judas Iscariot, and



declares that he was doomed to be tossed in this gulf to all eternity, with no protection from the fury of the elements but a small piece of cloth, which, while on earth, he had bestowed in charity. Judas also recommends to Huon to use every exertion to get out of the whirlpool. At his suggestion, all the sails being set, the vessel is carried before a favourable wind, and the master of the vessel makes for a distant shore, on which he descries what appears to him a small house, surrounded by a wood. After four days sail these objects prove to be a palace of miraculous magnitude and splendour, and the masts of innumerable vessels which had been wrecked on the rock of adamant on which this magnificent structure was situated. The pilot having now no longer power over the helm, the ship strikes on the rock, to which it was irresistibly attracted. Huon alone gets safe on shore, and after wandering for some time among tremendous precipices and sterile vallies, he climbs to the enchanted palace, which is beautifully described.<sup>1</sup> Here he enjoys no society for a long while but that of a hideous serpent, which he has the pleasure of despatching; but at length, in a remote apartment, he discovers five fairies performing the office of pastry cooks, who explain to him that this building had been constructed by the Lady of the Hidden Isle to protect her lover Julius Cæsar from the fury of three kings of Egypt, whose vessels, while in pursuit, had struck on the rock of adamant, and from whose treasures the palace had been so splendidly furnished. After a long stay in this island, Huon is at length carried off by a griffin, which occasionally haunted the shore; and at the end of a long aerial voyage, is set down on the top of a high mountain, which seems to have been a place of rendezvous for these animals. Our hero kills four of their number, which was rather an ungrateful return for the safe conduct which he had received from their fellow monster. Soon after his arrival on this spot, he discovers the Fountain of Youth, in which he has no sooner bathed than he feels recruited from the effects of his late perils and labours, and recovers his pristine vigour. This fiction of the fountain of youth has been almost as

universal as the desire of health and longevity. There is a fountain of this nature in the Greek romance of Ismene and Ismenias, in the German Book of Heroes, and the French Fabliau of Coquaigne,—

— La Fontaine de Jovent

Qui fit rajovenir le gent.

By the margin of this fountain, in which Huon had immersed himself, grew a tree, of which the apples partook of the resuscitating properties of the waters by which its roots were nourished. Huon is permitted by a celestial voice to gather three of these apples, and is also directed to the path by which he is to proceed. Having, therefore, descended the hill, he reaches the banks of a river, and embarks in a pinnace decked with gold and precious stones. This boat is carried down a stream with surprising velocity, and enters a subterraneous canal lighted by the radiance of gems, which formed the channel of the water, and of which Huon gathers a handful. The roar of the waves and tempest above is distinctly heard, but after a few days voyage the bark emerges into a tranquil sea, which he recognises to be the Persian Gulf. He lands in safety at the port of Tauris, where a skilful lapidary having inspected the precious stones which he had picked up during his subterraneous voyage, declares that one preserved from fire and poison, a second cured all diseases, a third repressed hunger and thirst, and a fourth rendered the wearer invisible. The possession of these very valuable articles procures for Huon a favourable reception from the old sultan of that district, on whom our hero bestows one of the apples of youth, which he had no sooner tasted than he receives the strength and appearance of a man of thirty. From motives of gratitude the sultan permits himself to be baptized, and places a fleet and army under the command of Huon, with which he now proceeds to the assistance of Esclarmonde. On his way he lands at the desert island of Abillant in quest of adventures, and his fleet being instantly dispersed by a storm, he is forced to remain. After wandering about for some time he ascends a mountain, whose summit formed a plain, round which a cask was rolling with wonderful noise and velocity. Huon arrests its progress with a hammer, and the inhabitant

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 17.



proclaims himself to be Cain, adding, that the cask is full of serpents and sharp spikes, and that he is doomed to loll in it till the day of judgment. The knight accordingly refuses to interfere in his punishment, and leaves him to prosecute his career in this uncomfortable conveyance.

In the course of his conversation with Cain, Huon was informed that a demon, who had been the contractor for this machine, was waiting for the fratricide in a boat near the shore. Availing himself of this hint he proceeds to the beach, and the evil spirit mistaking him for Cain, whom he personates, receives him into the bark, and lands him on the opposite coast—a contrivance which shows that the knight had not altogether forgotten the practices by which, in his youth, he gained admission to the hall of the emir of Babylon, and by which he first forfeited the favour of Oberon. In the present instance, however, his departure from truth is not followed by any punishment or disaster : on the contrary, he rejoins his fleet on the coast to which he had been transported by the fiend, and thence sets sail for France.

Huon does not seem to have been in any great haste to bring assistance to Esclarmonde. He visits Jerusalem on his way, and enters most gratuitously into a war with the sultan of Egypt.

On arriving at Marseilles he dismisses the Asiatic fleet, and proceeds to pay a visit to his uncle, the abbot of Clugny, whom he presents with one of the apples of youth. In the habit of a pilgrim he next comes to the court of Thiery, emperor of Germany, who at length agrees to restore his wife, and receives the third apple as his reward. Huon and Esclarmonde pay a short visit to their dominions, and then set out, according to invitation, for the enchanted forest of Oberon, who installs his favourite knight in the empire of Faëry, and expires shortly after. The remainder of the romance, or rather fairy tale, contains an account of the reign of Huon, and his disputes with Arthur (who had hoped for the appointment) as to the sovereignty of Fairy-land ; and also the adventures of the Duchess Clairette, the daughter of Huon and Esclarmonde, from whom was descended the illustrious family of Capet.

There are few romances of chivalry which possess more beauty and interest than Huon of Bourdeaux ; the story, however, is too long protracted, and the first part seems to have exhausted the author's stores of imagination. Huon is a more interesting character than most of the knights of Charlemagne. Even his weaknesses and disobedience of Oberon arise from excess of love or the ardour of military enterprise ; and our prepossession in his favour is much enhanced by a mildness of nature and tenderness of heart, superior to that of other heroes of chivalry. The subordinate characters in the work are also happily drawn : nothing can be better represented than the honest fidelity and zeal of Gerasmes, the struggles in the breast of the mother of Huon between maternal tenderness and devoted loyalty to Charlemagne, and the mixed character of that monarch, in which equity and moderation predominate, but are ever warped by an excess of blind paternal affection.

The early part of the romance of Huon bears a striking resemblance to the adventures of Otnit, king of Lombardy, related near the commencement of the Teutonic metrical romance of *The Book of Heroes*, which was written by the knight Wolfram of Bavaria early in the 13th century, and of which an entertaining analysis has been given in the *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*. Otnit, we are told, before setting out for Syria in order to gain the hand of its princess, met the dwarf Elberich, who was clothed in armour dighted with gold and diamonds. This dwarf presented Otnit with various gifts which possessed a magic power, and which prove of infinite service on his arrival in Syria. Elberich afterwards gave him personal assistance in his contest with the heathen father of his destined mistress ; and on one occasion, having rendered himself invisible, he tore a handful of hair from the beard of the pagan, and pulled out several of the teeth of his queen. The princess becomes enamoured of the knight, and is at last willingly delivered into his hands by the dwarf, who warns him, however, not to be guilty of any amorous indiscretions till his bride should be baptized.

Some analogy also subsists between the second part of Huon and the second and sixth



voyages of Sindbad ; but its resemblance to the voyages of Aboulfaouaris, in the Persian Tales, is much more striking. Judas swimming in the gulf corresponds with the story of the man whom the Persian adventurer fished up on his first voyage, and who had whirled about for three years, as a penance, in the sea near Java. This renowned mariner also escapes from an island, on which he had been wrecked, by a subterraneous passage which the sea had formed through one of its mountains ; and by the assistance of a neighbouring king he is enabled to succour his wife, of whose danger he had been apprized in a dream. The story of Cain and the attendant fiend in Huon, is the model or imitation of the Brazen Island, to which the ship of Aboulfaouaris is carried by an irresistible current, and in which he beholds the punishment of the Afrite or Rebel Genius. Indeed, the works of eastern fable are full of traditions concerning the punishments of Cain, one of which, it is somewhere said, was, that he could not be killed by spikes piercing his body. The author of the Arabic *Catena*, a collection of oriental commentaries on scripture, makes him proof against all the elements ; a sword could not hurt him, fire could not burn, water could not drown, nor lightning strike him (c. 8), a curse resembling that which was imposed by Kehama.

The next romance relating to knights, contemporary with Charlemagne, is that of

#### GUERIN DE MONTGLAVE.<sup>1</sup>

“A l' issue de l' yver que le joly temps d'esté commence, et qu' on voit les arbres florir et leurs fleurs espanyr, les oysillons chanter en toute joye et doulceur tant que leurs tons et doulx chants retentissent si melodieusement que toute joye et lyesse est de les escouter et ouyr ; tant que cueurs tristes pensifs et dolens s' en esjouissent et esmeuvent a delaisser dueil et toute tristesse, et se perforcent de valoir mieux—en celuy temps estoit a Montglave, le noble Duc Guerin, qui tant fut en son temps preux et vaillant chevalier.” This Guerin, who was brother of the duke of

Aquitaine, and ruled in Montglave (Lyons), a city he had acquired by his own prowess, had four sons. After reproaching them at a high festival for indolence and gluttony, he dismisses them from his palace in order to push their fortunes in the world. Arnaud, the eldest, is sent to his uncle Girard, duke of Aquitaine ; Millon, the second, proceeds to Pavia, and Girard and Regnier to the court of Charlemagne. The romance contains the separate adventures of the four knights, of which those of Arnaud alone are in any degree interesting.

Arnaud on his arrival at the capital of Aquitaine finds that Girard was dead, and that Hunault, his natural brother, had seized on the dukedom ; but, though attended only by a single squire, so completely was the usurper detested, that the principal inhabitants immediately invest Arnaud with the sovereignty. Hunault, unable openly to withstand this general disaffection, has recourse to stratagem. He pretends that he had only meant to preserve the dukedom for his brother, gradually insinuates himself into the confidence of Arnaud, and becomes his chief adviser. In a short while he proposes to him an union with the Saracen princess Fregonda, the daughter of a sultan, called Florant, who reigned in Lombardy ; and farther, persuades him to pay a visit to the court of that monarch. Hoping to obtain a beautiful princess, and convert an infidel, Arnaud sets out for Lombardy, accompanied by Hunault, who had previously informed the sultan that his brother was coming to solicit his daughter in marriage, and to abjure the Christian religion. The sultan and Arnaud are thus put at cross purposes. The former leaves the work or conversion to his daughter, but this princess had no sooner begun to love Arnaud, than she found that she could not endure Mahomet. Hunault is informed of the sentiments of the princess by his brother Arnaud, and immediately acquaints the sultan. In communicating this intelligence, he proposes that Arnaud should be confined in a dungeon, and at the same time offers on his own part to assume the turban, should Florant agree to

<sup>1</sup> Histoire du tres preux et vaillant Guerin de Montglave, lequel fit en son temps plusieurs nobles et illustres faits en armes ; et aussi parle des ter-

ribles et merveilleux faits de Robastre et Perdigon pour secourir le dit Guerin et ses enfants.—*Paris, sans date, 4to.*



assist him in recovering possession of Aquitaine. These proposals being accepted, Arnaud is thrown into confinement, and Hunault sets out by a retired road for the duchy. On his way he is suddenly seized with remorse for his apostacy and treason. Hearing a clock strike while in the midst of a forest, he turns towards the place whence the sound proceeded, and arrives at the gate of a hermitage, which is opened by a giant of horrible aspect. This singular recluse was Robastre, who had been the companion in arms of Guerin of Montglave, and had retired to this forest to perform penance. Hunault insists on confessing his sins, and the catalogue being finished, Robastre immediately knocks out his brains. The ground of this commentary on the confession is, that he would thus die penitent; but that if he lived, he would infallibly relapse into iniquity; a train of reasoning certainly more gigantic than theological.

Robastre next turns his attention to the best means of delivering Arnaud from prison. He first goes to consult with Perdigon, who had been formerly a companion of Guerin, and was once tolerably versed in the black art, but had for some time renounced all his evil practices, and retired to a cell in the same forest with Robastre. This enchanter is at first scrupulous about renewing his intercourse with the devil, but at length satisfies his conscience on the score of good intentions.

The giant arms himself with an old cuirass, which was buried below his hermitage, and throwing over it a robe, gains admittance to the court of the sultan Florant in the character of a mendicant dervis. He soon obtains a private interview with the princess, and introduces himself as a Christian, and the friend of Arnaud. In return he is informed by her that she pays frequent visits in secret to Arnaud, to whom she promises to procure him access. With this view she acquaints her father that Robastre is the most learned Mollah she had ever conversed with, and that if admitted to the prisoner he could not fail to convert him. Robastre is thus introduced into the dungeon, and privately concerts with Arnaud the means of escape. In the course of the ensuing night the princess arrives with provisions, with which the Mahometan ladies

in romance are always careful abundantly to supply their lovers. Robastre taking a goblet of water, baptizes the princess, and unites her to Arnaud. Having then knocked out the brains of the jailor, he breaks open the trap-door of the prison, and thus gets possession of the tower, of which the dungeon formed the foundation.

Arnaud escapes to Aquitaine, that he may assert his sovereignty, and afterwards return to the assistance of Robastre and the princess, who remain together in the tower. In that hold they are besieged by the sultan and his forces, but Robastre makes different *sorties*, in which he is always successful, being aided by the enchantments of his friend Perdigon, who at one time pelts the Saracens with incessant hail, and at others cuts them up by means of fantastic knights in black armour. Robastre, availing himself of the confusion into which the Saracens were thrown by one of these attacks, escapes with the princess, and arrives safe in Aquitaine. Here they have the mortification to find that Arnaud had been imprisoned by the maternal uncles of Hunault. They are vanquished, however, in single combat by Robastre. Arnaud is then restored to his dukedom, and soon after succeeds to the Lombard principality, by the conversion and abdication of his father-in-law. His subjects also become Christians, for in those days they implicitly conformed to the religion of their prince, instead of forcing him to adopt the faith of his people.

During these interesting transactions, Millon, the second son of Guerin of Montglave, had married his cousin, the daughter and heiress of the duke of Pavia. Regnier had been united to the duchess of Genoa, after defeating a ponderous giant, who was an unwelcome suitor, and Girard had espoused the countess of Thoulouse by the interest of Charlemagne, who conceived himself obliged to provide for the children of Guerin of Montglave, as he had, on one occasion, lost his whole kingdom to him at a game of chess.

To these provisions, however, there seems to have been no end, for Aimery, Arnaud's son, having grown up, came to demand a settlement on the plea of the game at chess. During one of his audiences, at which the queen was present, he seizes her majesty by the foot and



overthrows her. Charlemagne thinks it necessary to avenge this insult by besieging Viennes, the capital of Girard's territories, who is assisted in his defence by his three brothers and Robastre. After a good deal of general and promiscuous fighting, it is agreed that the quarrel should be decided by single combat. Roland is chosen on the part of Charlemagne, and Olivier, son of Regnier duke of Genoa, on the side of Girard.<sup>1</sup> These two champions had become acquainted during a truce, and recognising each other in the heat of combat, they drop their arms and embrace with much cordiality. By their means a reconciliation is effected, and the paladins of France resolve to turn their united arms against the Saracens.

During the combat with Olivier, Roland had been at one time in imminent danger, and Charlemagne had vowed a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The account of that expedition is detailed in the commencement of the romance of

#### GALYEN RHETORÉ,<sup>2</sup>

which was first printed at Paris in the year 1500. In that work Charlemagne and his paladins, among whom was Olivier, son of the duke of Genoa, proceed incognito to Jerusalem. Having betrayed themselves at that place by their eagerness in search of relics, the patriarch of Jerusalem considers it indispensable that they should pay a visit of ceremony to King Hugues. They find this monarch encamped on a vast plain with his grandees, who were all neat-herds or drovers, and his majesty a waggoner. Roland looked into court, where he counted 100,000 hogs, who were feeding on wheat. The paladins enquired if there was lodging for them, and were told by the porter that he had room for four thousand. On the day of their arrival the French peers were very kindly entertained at table, but, notwithstanding the ample accommodation, they were lodged in the same apartment at night. King Hugues, though a very good man, was extremely curious to learn what strangers said of his hospitality, and accordingly concealed an interpreter in a

corner of the chamber allotted to his guests. The peers being unable to sleep, began to brag (*gaber*). Roland boasted that he could sound his horn with such force that it would bring down the palace: Ogier, the Dane, averred that he would crumble to dust one of the chief pillars of the edifice: the boasts of Olivier, the youngest of the peers, related to the beautiful Princess Jacqueline, the daughter of Hugues. The king is informed of this conversation before retiring to rest, and being much disappointed at hearing nothing but improbable lies, instead of the expected praises of his hospitality, he treats his guests with much less civility, next morning, than he had formerly used. Having learned the cause of his resentment, the paladins depute Orlando to acquaint him that their boasts were mere pleasantries. King Hugues, however, informs him that he thought they were in very bad taste, and that the paladins must consent to remain his prisoners, or perform what they had undertaken. Nothing but a very bitter aversion to liars could have driven the good king to this hasty measure, since he was obliged in its execution to expose the honour of his family in a very delicate point. The French peers accept the latter alternative proposed to them; and from the fulfilment of the boast of Olivier, sprung Galyen, the hero of the romance, surnamed Rhetoré, or Restauré, by the fairy who presided at his birth, because by his means there was to be revived in France the high spirit of chivalry, which was in danger of being lost by the death of the paladins, who perished at Roncesvalles.

This young prince having grown up, set out for Europe in quest of his father. Having arrived at Genoa, he learned that Charlemagne and his peers were engaged in an expedition against the Saracens of Spain. To Spain he accordingly directed his course, but met with many adventures, and performed a variety of exploits, before reaching the camp of Charlemagne. Thence he departed for a division of the army, in which he understood his father was brigaded. He arrived after the defeat of Roncesvalles, and was only recognized by Olivier in his expiring

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Nobles prouesses et vaillances de Galyen Rhetoré, fils du noble Olivier le Marquis et de la belle Jac-

queline fille du Roi Hugues, qui fut Empereur de Constantinople.



moments.<sup>1</sup> Galyen having performed the last duties to his father, was of great service in the subsequent war with Marsilius, and also detected the treason, and insisted on the punishment, of Gano; the account of which nearly corresponds with the detail in the chronicle of Turpin. He was soon, however, obliged to depart on hearing of the death of Hugues, and the usurpation of the crown by the brothers of that prince; he vanquishes them in single combat, rescues his mother, whom they had condemned to death, and afterwards, in her right, ascends the throne.

The two following romances are believed to have been written in the beginning of the 15th century, but the first edition of both is without date. In the prologue to

#### MILLES ET AMYS,<sup>2</sup>

which shall be first mentioned, the work is said to be extracted from ancient chronicles. "J'ay voulu extraire leurs faicts et gestes, et les fortunes a eux advenues ainsi comme Je les ay trouvées en histoires anciennes jadis trouvées et enregistrées en plusieurs livres faisant mention d'eux par maniere de croniques," and in the 58th chapter, "il est assavoir que ceste hystoire icy a este extraicte de l'une des trois gestes du royaume de France, et ne furent que trois gestes au dit pays qui ont eu honneur et renomme, dequoy le premier a este Doolin de Mayence, l'autre Guerin, la tierce si a este de Pepin dequoy est issu le Roy Charlemagne." This detail about the ancient histories, and the three Gestes, is probably feigned to give the stamp of authority. Milles and Amys, however, are mentioned in the Chronicle of Alberic de Troisfontaines, an author of the 13th century, who says they perished in the year 774, in an expedition undertaken by Charlemagne against Didier, king of the Lombards. Their story is, besides, related in the Speculum Historiale of Vincent de Beauvais, and is there said to have occurred in the reign of Pepin. The early part of the romance, particularly that which relates to the leprosy of Amys, and his cure by sacrifice of the children of Milles, is the subject of the

English metrical Amys and Amylion, of which an account has been given by Mr Ellis, in his Specimens of Metrical Romances.

Milles was the son of Anceaume, count of Clermont, and Amys of his seneschal. The former came into the world with the mark of a sword on his right hand, to the utter amazement of the pope, who held him at the baptismal font. His parents, in gratitude for his birth, set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The count was taken captive by the sultan of Acre, and banished to an island which for forty years had been governed by a griffin. But instead of being devoured by this monster, as was intended, he contrived to despatch him by favour of St George, who descended from heaven on horseback, clad in white armour, bright as the sun.

During the absence of Anceaume, however, the Count de Limoges seizes on Clermont. The nurse of Milles is in consequence forced to fly with her charge, and beg alms from province to province. Amys, son of the seneschal, is meanwhile brought up as a foundling by his uncle, Regnier of Langres, who durst not educate him as his nephew, being a vassal of the Duke of Burgundy, who was an ally of the Count de Limoges.

Milles commences his career in chivalry by purloining his nurse's hoard, which she had amassed while flying with him from Clermont. With this treasure he repairs to the province of Burgundy, where he forms an intimate friendship with Amys. Their perfect resemblance in appearance is the amusement of every one, and gives rise to many comical mistakes.

At length Milles being discovered to be the son of the rightful Count of Clermont, is forced to leave Burgundy, and escapes with his friend Amys to Constantinople. Here Milles meets with his mother, the Countess of Clermont, who had escaped from the power of the Sultan of Acre, and was acting as governess to the Greek princess Sidoina. The city was at that time besieged by the sultan, but he is totally defeated, and the father of Milles, who was still detained prisoner by the Saracen monarch, is freed from captivity; Milles marries Sidoina, and soon after ascends in her right the throne of Constantinople.

After some time spent in the cares of empire,

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Le Roman des vaillans chevaliers Milles et Amys, lesquels en leur vivant firent de grandes prouesses.



Milles departs with Amys for France, recovers his paternal inheritance, and bestows a dukedom on his friend. In his absence the Saracens burn his capital, his empress, and her mother ; and Milles, in consequence of this conflagration, espouses Bellisande, daughter of Charlemagne, while Amys is united to Lubiane, the heiress of the Duke of Friezeland.

Some years having passed in unwonted repose, the friends at length set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. When about to return, Amys is unexpectedly smitten with leprosy. On their arrival Milles is joyfully received by Bellisande ; but his unfortunate companion is driven from his own castle by his wife, who appears to have been ignorant of the value of a husband of this description. The servants whom she detaches to drown him, being moved with compassion, conduct their master to the castle of Milles, where he is received with the utmost hospitality.

Soon after his arrival it is revealed to Amys in a dream, that he could only be cured of the leprosy with which he was afflicted, if bathed in the blood of the children of Milles. The leper informs his friend of the prescription he had received, which I suppose was in those days accounted a specific for this disorder, as Gower, in the 2d book of his *Confessio Amantis*, tells a story of Constantine, when struck with leprosy, ordering a bath of this description. The heads of his two infants are immediately struck off by the father. Amys thus enjoys the benefit of the prescribed bath, and Milles soon after returning to lament over the bodies of his children, finds them in as perfect health as before they had been beheaded, "et se jouoyent dedans le lict, l'un a l'autre, d'une pomme que nostre Seigneur leur avoit donné."

In gratitude for these miraculous cures, the two friends set out on a pilgrimage ; but on their return through Lombardy they are treacherously killed by Ogier the Dane, who was at that time in rebellion against Charlemagne.

Milles, when he proceeded on his pilgrimage, left his two children, Anceaume and Florisell, in the cradle. These infants were constantly guarded by an ape, who acted as an assiduous nurse, and was gifted with a most excellent understanding and benevolent

disposition.—"Si n'est point de memoire d'homme que jamais on n'ouyt parler de la condition de tel Cinge : Car il avoit en luy grant sens et memoire, et mainte bonne maniere avoit apprise tandis qu'on le nourrissoit. Sy aymoient parfaitement ce Cinge les deux petis enfans du Comte, tellement que nuit et jour ne les pouoit laisser ; et ne sceut on oncques garder qu'il ne couchast toutes les nuits avecques eux sans leur faire nulle mesprison, ny aucun mal : ne pour quelque bature qu'on luy sceust faire jamais ne vouloit laisser les petis enfans, et tout le long du jour leur tenoit compagnie, et estoit toute son intention aux enfans. Et ne faisoit que les baiser et accoller, et jamais ne vouloit ne boire ne menger si ce n'estoit de la propre viande qu'on bailloit aux enfans." This ape had prepared the minds of the household of Milles for the intelligence of his death, by equipping his children in a complete suit of mourning.

Lubiane, the wicked widow of Amys, seeing that the children were now left without the protection of a father, resolves, in concert with her brother, on their destruction. The countess, their mother, is privately put to death, and the children carried off, to the great consternation of the ape, who insists on accompanying them. After three months detention at the residence of Lubiane, they are thrown by her command into the sea. The ape swims after them till two angels of paradise descend in disguise of swans, and bear away the children safe through the sea ; one carries Anceaume to the coast of Provence, where he is picked up and educated by a woodman. The other conducts Florisell to the shores of Genoa, where he is taken under the protection of a lioness, who introduces him to her cubs, with which he is gradually accustomed to hunt. The ape having lost sight of them, continues to swim till he is received on board a merchant vessel, which soon after comes into harbour. Its crew propose to take him home to their own country, but he hastily wishes them good morning.—"Et pour le bien qu'ils luy avoient fait ne leur dist aultre grant mercy, sinon qu'il leur fist la moue."

Our ape spent fifteen days in a forest, searching for the children, for whose sake he subsisted all that time on herbs and water, although habitu-



ally he was somewhat addicted to the pleasures of the table. Finding his search in the forest vain, he set out for Clermont, the paternal inheritance of his wards, where he was received with acclamations by the populace; but he declined the honours of a public entertainment, as he felt his spirits depressed on account of the loss of the children: it would also appear that he was in very bad humour, "*car il mordoit et esgratignoit tous, qui n'estoit pas sa coustume.*" He paid his first visit to Richer, the old seneschal of Milles, whom he persuaded to proceed to the palace of Lubiane, to ascertain the fate of the children. The seneschal is immediately thrown into prison by Lubiane, who sets out, accompanied by her brother, for the court of Charlemagne, to obtain a grant of the county of Clermont, on pretence that the race of Milles is extinct. Meanwhile the ape having insinuated himself into the confidence of the jailer, gains access to the seneschal, and at the very first interview suggests the propriety of writing to Charlemagne, to give him some insight into the character of the claimants. The ape charges himself with the letter, but from the badness of the roads and want of relays, he does not reach Paris till some days after the traitors. He makes his first appearance at court, though still in his travelling dress, during a great festival, and signalizes his arrival by assaulting the Countess Lubiane, rending her garments, and even committing ravages on her person. He then respectfully presents the letter to Charlemagne, who thinks the matter of sufficient importance to consult his peers. The difficulty is to find a champion to maintain the accusation: the ape, however, readily steps forth as opponent to one of the relatives of Lubiane, who offered himself as her defender. Defiances of this description, singular as they may appear, were not unknown in France about the period of the composition of this work. In Monfauçon (*Monumens de la Monarchie François*, vol. iii. p. 68), there is an account of a combat which took place in 1371, between a greyhound and a knight who had treacherously slain the dog's master. This animal attacked the as-

sassin with such violence, whenever they happened to meet, that suspicion was at length excited, and Charles the Wise<sup>1</sup> appointed a solemn combat between the parties. The knight was provided with a club: the dog had only his natural arms, but was supplied with an open cask as a place of retreat; the just cause prevailed, the traitor was forced to confess his crime, and the memory of the event was preserved in a painting in the hall of the castle of Montargis. On the present occasion, too, the good cause and our ape are triumphant. The champion of Lubiane is soon obliged to confess himself vanquished, in order to avoid being torn piecemeal: according to the established customs, he is hanged after the combat, and Lubiane is burned alive. We are informed by the author of the romance, that the history of the ape, and particularly of this judicial combat, were delineated in his time on the walls of the great hall of the palace of Paris, which was burned, I believe, in 1618.

While the ape was thus distinguishing himself at court, and preparing materials for the genius of future artists, Florissell, the son of Milles, having followed his comrades, the young lions, in the course of their field sports as far as the Venetian territory, is caught by Gloriant, the Saracen king of that country, who delighted in the chase of wild beasts. In a few days the lioness and her cubs came to Venice, to reclaim him, but by this time her *eleve* had fallen in love with the king's daughter, "*parquoy Florissell ne pensa plus au lion, ne n'entint conte;*" and they are accordingly obliged to return without him to their den, after depopulating the neighbourhood.

Anceaume, the other son of Milles, being detected in an intrigue with the daughter of the woodman, is driven from the house, and flies for refuge to an adjacent monastery. To this place Richer, the seneschal, accompanied by the ape, comes to pay his devotions. The animal, by the fineness of his nose, soon recognizes his young master, and persuades the seneschal to take him along with them.

He is accordingly introduced by the ape at the court of Charlemagne, and serves in an expedition undertaken by that monarch against Venice, of which the professed object was to recover the body of St Marc, which had been interred there about five hundred

<sup>1</sup> M. de Sainte Foix, however, in his *Essais Historiques sur Paris*, says this dog flourished in the time of Philip Augustus.



years before. In this campaign Florisell distinguishes himself on the side of the Saracens, and Anceaume on that of the Christians. Anceaume takes Gloriant, king of Venice, prisoner; and Florisell overthrows and sends captive to Venice the bravest peers of Charlemagne. At length the two brothers are sent out against each other, and after a furious contest, being both tired, they sit down to rest. The young warriors are thus led mutually to recount the story of the early part of their lives. From this reciprocal detail they conjecture that they are related, and Florisell in consequence proceeds with Anceaume to the camp of Charlemagne. There the surmises of the brothers are confirmed by the testimony of Richer and of the ape, who embraces them alternately with much sympathy. "Les deux freres s'en allerent coucher ensemble, et le Cinge s'en alla avec eux, et se mussa dessoubz leur liet ainsi qu'il avoit apprins. Et puis, quant ils furent couchez, les vint accoller et baiser tout a son ayse; tout ne plus ne moins que fait ung amant qui baise s' amye. Si fut ce Cinge celle nuit si surprins d' amour, qu' il se coucha entre les deux enfans, la ou il mourut la nuict de joye. Et quant le roy Charlemagne le sceut si en getta maint soupir, et alla dire—Haa Cinge moult avois le cueur scavant; Je scay de vray que tu es mort de joye."

The romance of

#### JOURDAIN DE BLAIVES<sup>1</sup>

may in one respect be regarded as a continuation of Milles and Amys: Jourdain, who gives name to the work, being the son of Girard of Blaves, one of the children of Amys. It is said to be "extraite d' ung viel livre moult ancien qu' estoit en Ryne et viel Picart;" a form in which it is often cited by Du Cange in his Glossary. Having been converted into prose, it was printed at Paris in 4to, without date, and at the same place in folio, 1520.

The hero of this romance came into the world with one of his legs white as snow, and

the other black as ebony; while the right arm appeared of a rose, and the left of a citrine colour. A clerk explained that these personal peculiarities portended a chequered life—that at one time this party-coloured infant would be seated on a throne, that at another he would be poor and in captivity.

These predictions are verified by the event, for Jourdain in his youth is so much persecuted by a knight who had treacherously slain his father, that he is obliged to abandon his paternal estates. On his voyage from Blaves, being unfortunately ship-wrecked, he is preserved, not by a dolphin or a swan, but by a stag which was luckily in waiting, and which carries him to the shore of Gardes. The incidents that occurred on that coast have a strong resemblance to the landing of Ulysses in the kingdom of Alcinous, and his interview with Nausicaa. Jourdain, like the Grecian hero, is discovered by Driabelle, the king's daughter, while he was reposing under a tree, and although he did not use the modest precaution of Ulysses,<sup>2</sup> he is accosted by the princess, who conducts him to her father's palace, and clothes him in suitable raiment. He is at first mistaken for a person of low degree; but having vanquished an host of pagans and giants, by which the kingdom of Gardes was attacked, he receives the Princess Driabelle in marriage as the reward of his prowess.

Soon after the nuptials, Jourdain sets out with his bride for France, in order to recover his paternal inheritance. During the voyage a storm having arisen, it is proposed that Driabelle, who was by this time pregnant, should be thrown overboard as a victim to appease the tempest. Her husband at first hesitates, but one of his knights removes his scruples by suggesting that if an air-hole were bored in one side, she might be placed in a large cask, fitted up with a comfortable bed, and stocked with gold and silver. On his return to Gardes, Jourdain boasts of this admirable expedient to his father-in-law, who of course could feel no uneasiness as to the fate of a daughter thrown overboard in a

<sup>1</sup> Les faits et prouesses du noble et vaillant chevalier Jourdain de Blaves, lequel conquesta plusieurs royaumes barbares—les peines qu' il eut a obtenir l'

amour de la belle Driabelle fille au fort roi Richard de Gardes.

<sup>2</sup> Εκ τυκινης δ' ὕλης ἵπποθρον κλασε χειρι παχείη,  
Φύλλων ὡς εὐσαιτο περὶ χροὶ μῆδεα φῶτος.



cask which contained so much gold and silver, and had an air-hole bored in its side.

Some years after, our hero having succeeded to the crown of Gardes, sets out in quest of Driabelle, and, after a long search, finds her residing with a female hermit on the borders of a forest in the territory of Pisa. The wooden cask in which she had been enshrined was picked up on the shore, to which it had miraculously floated, by a miller in the neighbourhood, who received Driabelle into his house, but exposed the daughter to whom she shortly after gave birth. To avoid the amorous solicitations with which she was persecuted by her host, she had sought refuge with the recluse. Soon after this discovery, Jourdain, while hunting one day in the forest, meets his daughter in company with two fawns and a hind, by whom she had been kindly entreated when exposed by the miller. Fortunately the princess had inherited some personal peculiarities from her father, whence the queen is enabled to identify her by certain marks that had been observed on her person shortly after birth; and as she was very beautiful, and of course well educated, she was betrothed to Sadoine, the Saracenic king of Scotland, whom Jourdain had recently converted along with his people to the true faith.

In this work the leading incident bears a striking resemblance to the history of Appolonius of Tyre, whose queen, to appease a storm, was thrown overboard in a chest, which floated to the coast of Ephesus. (See pp. 43, 44.)

The romance of

#### DOOLIN DE MAYENCE<sup>1</sup>

is supposed to have been written during the reign of Charles VIII. of France, that is about the end of the 15th century. This inference has been drawn partly from the language of the work—partly from the character and actions attributed to Charlemagne. The romancers who wrote a few centuries after his death did justice to his talents and virtues; but their successors have painted

him as an unreasonable monarch, and sometimes even as a cowardly knight. At whatever period written, the work was first published in 1501, at Paris, by Verard. This edition was followed by a second in 1549, 4to, from the same place; and a third at Lyons, 1604.

Doolen of Mayence, the hero of this tale of chivalry, was the son of Guyon de Mayence, who, while engaged in the chase, had the misfortune to run down a hermit in mistake for a stag. As a suitable penance for this inadvertence, he resolved to occupy the cell of the deceased for the remainder of his days. During his absence the seneschal having seized on Mayence, his countess is condemned to death, on pretence that she had privately procured the assassination of her husband, and all she can obtain is a delay in the execution of the sentence, in hopes that some champion may appear to espouse her quarrel. Her children are also committed to a ruffian, with instructions that they should be murdered: this design is accomplished on the younger children, but Doolin escapes, and is found by his father wandering in the neighbourhood of the hermitage. There he is brought up in perfect seclusion, till, having attained the proper age, he and his father set out to recover Mayence, and to rescue the countess. On their way to the city Guyon is struck with sudden blindness, which was a manifest indication of the will of heaven that he should not quit his retirement. Doolin therefore proceeds alone, and after experiencing a singular adventure at a castle which lay on his route,<sup>2</sup> he arrives at Mayence. There, by overthrowing her accuser, who must have been possessed of wonderful patience, he rescues his mother from the death that had so long awaited her. He is now invested with the sovereignty of Mayence, but has soon to sustain a war with Charlemagne, who had been exasperated at Doolin having failed on some occasion to salute him with proper respect. In the course of this war the conduct of Charlemagne is that of a weak and tyrannical prince; but he at length

<sup>1</sup> L' Histoire du preux et vaillant Dolin de Mayence, en son temps la fleur des chevaliers Francais, contenant ses faits, gestes, batailles et aventures

amirables; ensemble les prouesses et haut faits d'armes de Charlemagne et autres chevaliers.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, No. 20.



attempts to effect a reconciliation, by offering his enemy the hand of the countess of Nivernois, who was his niece. This proposal is rejected by Doolin, who was fully as unreasonable as Charlemagne, with great contempt. "Vrayment," says Charlemagne, "beau sire Doolin, Je ne me puis assez esbair de vous trouver si dur a appointer." Doolin, however, had placed his affections on the daughter of the lord of Vaclere, a city beyond the Rhine, not on account of her beauty or accomplishments, but because she was beloved by the sultan of Turkey, "lequel est si beau damoyseau que merveille;" and he coveted possession of the city, not for its extent or riches, but because it was held by a cruel giant, the lady's father, who had under him thirty thousand Saracens of uncommon stature and ferocity. Charlemagne expresses his astonishment that Doolin should be "si outrecuidé et indiscret, qu' il cuide que Je luy feray don de la chose ou Je n'ay nul droict, non plus que a ce qui est au plus profond des Indes." The refusal of Charlemagne to bestow this territory on Doolin, produces a single combat between them, which is interrupted by an angel, who commands the emperor to acquire it for Doolin by force of arms. Accordingly the remainder of the romance is occupied with the wars against Vaclere and the king of Denmark, who supported the pretensions of the handsome sultan. These campaigns terminate with the capture of Vaclere, the marriage of Doolin with the giant's daughter, and his accession to the throne of Denmark by right of conquest.

The exploits of Doolin are the subject of a German poem, by Alxinger, in the style of Oberon, and which, next to the work of Wieland, is accounted the best in the mixed class of heroic and comic poetry. But whatever may be the merit of the poem, the *Histoire de Doolin* is not an interesting romance, and its hero is chiefly remarkable as the ancestor of a long race of Paladins, particularly Ogier the Dane, so frequently mentioned by the Italian poets.

<sup>1</sup> Romans du preux et vaillant Chevalier Ogier le Danois duc de Danemarcke, &c.

<sup>2</sup>Icy endroit est cil livre finez,  
Qui des Enfances d' Ogier est apelez ;

The fabulous history of

### OGIER LE DANOIS,<sup>1</sup>

though not printed till about the same period with that of Doolin, was written at a much earlier date, or at least the incidents were earlier imagined. There can be little doubt, that a northern hero of the name of Ogierus, or Hulgerus, actually existed in the age of Charlemagne. Bartholinus, in his "*Dissertatio Historica de Hulgero Dano qui Caroli magni tempore floruit*," cites a great mass of old French and German chronicles, as authorities for his existence and martial exploits, his being sent as an hostage to Paris, his flight to Lombardy, and marriage to an English princess. The traditions concerning this hero were probably first communicated to the French nation by the Norman invaders, and were embodied in a number of metrical romances, written in the reign of Philip the Hardy. Of these the longest is *Les Enfances d' Ogier le Danois*, which was written by Adenez, or Adans as he is sometimes called, herald to Henry III., Duke of Brabant,<sup>2</sup> and surnamed *Roy*, from having been crowned in a poetical contest. He informs us that the materials of his romance were communicated to him by a monk, called Savary, from certain northern legends preserved in the abbey of St Denis. This metrical work of Adenez, and others of a similar description, were the foundation of the prose romance which was formed not long after the appearance of its metrical prototypes. The infamous and traitorous character assigned in the prose romance to the knights templar, makes it probable that it was written in the time of Philip the Fair, in whose reign that order was suppressed, on account of real or alleged enormities.

Doolin of Mayence had by his wife, Flandrina, a son called Geoffrey, who succeeded to him in the kingdom of Denmark, and Ogier the Dane was son to this monarch.

The fairies, who only act a part in the more recent romances of the Round Table, appear in the earliest tales relating to Charlemagne.

Or vueille Diex qu' il soit parachevez,  
En tel maniere qu' estre n' en puisse blamez  
Li Roy Adans, par ki il est rimez



Not fewer than six of these intermeddling beings presided at the birth of Ogier. Five of the number bestowed on him the most precious gifts and accomplishments, while Morgane, the sister of Arthur, who was the sixth, decreed, that when Ogier had passed a long life of glory, he should come to her palace of Avallon in his old age, and, laying his laurels at her feet, partake with her the enjoyments of love in the finest residence in the universe.

Some disputes having arisen between the king of Denmark and Charlemagne, Ogier, who was now ten years of age, was, at the adjustment of differences, sent as an hostage to Paris, where he was instructed in all the accomplishments of the time. At the end of four years, Charlemagne, irritated by some new transgression of the King of Denmark, banished Ogier to the castle of St Omer. There his confinement and exile were soothed by the kindness of the governor, and still more sweetly solaced by the attentions of his daughter, the beautiful Bellissande. Ogier seems to have been on no occasion disposed to abide the amorous old age reserved him by decree of the fairies: but he was unfortunately withdrawn from a residence which love had begun to render delightful, and summoned to attend Charlemagne to Italy, on an expedition against the Saracens. In the romance there is a long, but not very interesting account, of the services he performed for Charlemagne, and his narrow escapes from the plots of Charlot, Charlemagne's unworthy son, who was envious of his renown. The emperor having at length triumphed over all his enemies, and re-established Leo in the pontifical throne, returned to France, accompanied by Ogier.

The first intelligence the Danish hero learned on his arrival, was, that Bellissande had made him father of a son, and the next, that he had succeeded to the crown of Denmark by the demise of his parents. He took immediate possession of this sovereignty, but after a reign of some years he resigned it, and returned to France.

Meanwhile the son of Ogier and Bellissande had grown up, and was a deserved favourite at the court of Charlemagne. One day, having unfortunately vanquished Charlot at a game of chess, that prince, who was not remarkable

for his forbearance, struck him dead with the chess board. The exasperated father of the victim insulted his sovereign so grossly in consequence of this outrage, that he was forced to fly into Lombardy. Didier, king of that country, was then at war with Charlemagne; but, spite of the assistance of Ogier, he was worsted by the French monarch. The Danish hero escaped from a castle in which he was besieged, but while asleep by the side of a fountain, he was taken captive by Archbishop Turpin. Ogier refused to be reconciled to his sovereign, unless the guilty Charlot was delivered up to his vengeance. These conditions were complied with, but when Ogier was about to strike off the head of the prince, his arm was arrested by the voice of an angel, commanding him to spare the son of Charlemagne.

After this interposition, Ogier returned to his obedience, and was soon after employed to combat a Saracen giant, who had landed with a great army in France, but was defeated and slain according to the final lot of all pagans and giants. Ogier received as a reward the hand of the Princess Clarice of England. This lady had followed her father to France, who came there to do homage for his crown. She had been intercepted, however, and detained by the pagans, from whom she was rescued by the exertions of Ogier, who, soon after his union, passed over to England, and in right of his wife, was there acknowledged as king; but, tired of the enjoyment of an empire which had been so easily gained, he soon after set out in quest of new adventures, the account of which forms the second part of the romance.

Of this division of the work, a considerable portion is occupied with the wars in Palestine. Our adventurer successively seized on Acres, Jerusalem, and Babylon, of which cities he was declared king, but resigned them in turn to his kinsmen, who had accompanied him on his expedition, and anew set sail for France. For some time he enjoyed a favourable breeze, but at length his vessel was driven by a tempest on a rock, to which it became immovably fixed. In proportion as provisions failed, the sailors were in turn thrown overboard. When all his crew had been thus disposed of, Ogier landed and directed his steps to a castle



of adamant, which, though invisible during day, shone by night with miraculous splendour. His first entrance into this mansion has a striking resemblance to a description in the romance of Partenopex : every thing is magnificently arranged, but no person appears. At length, having entered a saloon, he perceived a repast prepared, and a horse seated at table, who, on the approach of Ogier, instantly rose, presented him with water, and then returned to his chair. The hospitable quadruped next made signs to his guest to partake of the viands, but Ogier, little accustomed to fellowship with such hosts, and scarce comprehending his imperfect gesticulation, left the whole repast for behoof of the landlord, who, after a plentiful supper, conducted the stranger to a magnificent chamber prepared for his repose. Next morning Ogier went abroad, and followed a path which conducted him to a delightful meadow. "Welcome," said the fairy Morgana, who now appeared richly attired, amidst an assemblage of beautiful nymphs—"welcome to the palace of Avallon, where you have been so long expected." She then re-conducted him to the palace of adamant; but the reader hears no more of the horse, nor any satisfactory reason why he was preferred to the office of *croupier*, and selected to do the honours of the castle, for which he must have been but indifferently qualified, either by his dexterity in carving, or his talents for conversation.

On his arrival at the palace, Morgana placed a ring on the hand of Ogier, who, though at that time upwards of a hundred years of age, immediately assumed the appearance of a man of thirty. She afterwards fixed on his brow a golden crown, adorned with precious stones, which formed leaves of myrtle and of laurel. From this moment the court of Charlemagne and its glories were effaced from his recollection—the thrones of Denmark and Palestine vanished from his view—Morgana was now the sole object of his devotion. The delights of her garden and palace were ever varied by magic; and, as described in the romance, remind us of the illusions of Alcina. The fairy also introduced her lover to the acquaintance of her brother Arthur, who had resided with her for the last four hundred years. Oberon, too, another brother of Mor-

gana, frequently visited his sister, and placed at her disposal a troop of spirits, who assumed a variety of forms, appearing in the shape of Lancelot, Tristan, or some other knight of the Round Table, who came as if to consult their sovereign on the interpretation of the laws of that celebrated institution, and to discourse with him on their former exploits. Sometimes they were pleased to take the figures of giants and monsters, and in these characters attacked the pavilion of the monarch. Ogier and the British king were delighted with each other's society, and were frequently engaged in joust and tournament with these imaginary foes.<sup>1</sup>

Two hundred years having elapsed in these amusements, the moment arrived at which Ogier was destined to be separated for a short while from his mistress. The crown of oblivion having been removed from his brow, the glories of his former life burst on his memory, and he suddenly departed for the court of France, where he was destined to revive, under the first of the Capets, that spirit of chivalry which had sunk under the feeble successors of Charlemagne. The romance describes, in a way amusing enough, the astonishment of the courtiers at the appearance of this celebrated but old-fashioned hero, and his reciprocal surprise at the change that had taken place in manners and customs. France, and even Paris, were at this time threatened by the northern nations who had settled in Normandy. Ogier was appointed to command an expedition against them, and by restoring the genuine spirit of chivalry in his army, entirely defeated the enemy. After his return he assisted at the meetings of the councils; and, in the course of a twelvemonth, revived throughout the kingdom the vigour of the age of Charlemagne.

As Ogier still bore the ring he had received from Morgana, which gave him the appearance of unfaded youth, he was highly favoured by the ladies of the court. The secret, however, had nearly transpired by means of the old countess of Senlis, who, while making love to Ogier, drew this talisman from his hand and placed it on her own. She instantly blossomed into youth, while Ogier shrunk

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 21.



into decrepitude. The countess was forced to give back the ring, and former appearances were restored; but, as she had discovered its value, she employed thirty champions to regain it, all of whom were successively defeated by the knight.

About this time the king of France having died, the queen wisely resolved to espouse a hero, who, with the bloom and vigour of thirty, possessed the experience of three centuries: but while the marriage ceremony was performing, the bridegroom was suddenly carried away by Morgana, and, to the misfortune of chivalry, has never since been heard of. The fairies of romance are much in the habit of conveying away mortals who possess the qualities that engage their affections. In the *Arabian Nights*, Ahmed, son of the sultan of the Indies, is transported to the castle of the fairy Pari Banou, who was enamoured of him; and in the fabliau of Lanval, the knight of that name was borne away, like Ogier, to Avallon, whence he has never yet returned.

Ogier le Danois is certainly one of the most interesting stories of the class to which it belongs, and has accordingly gone through a great number of editions, of which the earliest was printed at Paris, in folio, by Verard, without date, and the next at Lyons, in 1525.

The hero of this popular work has been the subject of two romantic poems in Italy, *Il Danese Uggieri*, and *La Morte del Danese*. He is also frequently mentioned by Ariosto and Boiardo. Pulci, in his *Morgante Maggior*, alludes in a jocular manner to the fiction of his long-protracted existence:—

“E del Danese che ancor vivo sia  
Dicono alcun (ma non la Istoria mia),  
E che si truova in certa grotta oscura,  
E spesso armato a caval par che stia,  
Si che chi il vede gli mette paura.”

*Morg. Mag.* c. 28.

There exists a romance which gives an account of the exploits of the son of Ogier and Morgane, called Meurvin, from whom the celebrated Godfrey of Bouillon is feigned to

have been descended. This work has gone through many editions, but seems totally uninteresting.

It has already been mentioned, that Ogier the Dane, was grandson of Doolin of Mayence. Doolin appears to have been the patriarch of chivalry; for, besides his eldest son Geoffrey, the father of Ogier, he had a child of his own name, who inherited the country of Mayence, and was the ancestor of Gan, who acts so villainous a part in the Italian poems. The exploits of a third son form the subject of the romance *Gerard d' Euphrate*, which the author says he was employed for thirty years in translating from the Walloon rhyme, and which was published in folio, 1549. The scene of most of the adventures is laid in the east, and the whole work is very freely interspersed with enchantments, and the machinations of magicians and fairies, some of whom were friendly and others hostile to Gerard, the hero of the romance. A fourth son of Doolin was Beuves, count of Aigremont, who was father of Vivian and the christian enchanter Maugis, the Malagigi of Ariosto. Aymon, count of Dordogne, the youngest son of Doolin, left a posterity still more illustrious, having been the parent of Renaud de Montauban and his three brothers, whose names suggest every thing that is splendid and romantic in poetry or fiction.

There are different French romances, both in prose and verse, concerning the adventures and exploits of the four sons of Aymon. In these the same circumstances are frequently repeated, which renders a separate analysis of each superfluous.

The History of Maugis<sup>1</sup> and his brother Vivian derives considerable interest from the novelty of the character of its hero, and the singular enchantments he employs. In his infancy Maugis was stolen by a Moorish slave, with the intention of carrying him into Paganism. He was rescued, however, by the united efforts of a lion and leopard, and was picked up by a benevolent fairy, who was fortunately traversing the desert at the moment. A dwarf, whom the fairy kept in pay,

<sup>1</sup> La tres plaisante histoire de Maugis d' Aigremont et de Vivian son frere, en laquelle est contenu comme le dist Maugis a l' aide de Oriande la Fee s' amie alla en l' isle de Boucault ou il s' habilla en

diable, et comment il enchanta le diable Raouart et occist le serpent qui gardoit la roche par laquelle chose il conquist le bon cheval Bayard et aussi conquesta le grant Sorgalant.—Paris, 1527, 4to.



soon after acquainted her with the lineage of the child. Having received this information, she conferred on him the benefits of baptism, and sent him to her brother to be initiated in magic, the rudiments of which he acquired with wonderful facility. His first magical experiment was of the boldest description,—he personated the devil, and in that character passed into the island of Boucault, where he subdued and tamed the horse Bayardo, an exploit attributed by Tasso to Rinaldo. This unruly steed inhabited a cavern which was guarded by a horrible dragon, and was in the vicinity of a volcano which formed one of the principal mouths of hell. There is a striking resemblance between this adventure and the eastern story of the Rakshe, a winged horse, which rendered the dry island uninhabitable till he was subdued by Housheng, King of Persia, who tamed and mounted him in all his wars with the Dives. Maugis having signalised himself by the conquest of Bayardo, was admitted to the necromantic university of Toledo, where he completed his studies, and, according to some accounts, held the professor of magic's chair in that city, which was distinguished as a school for the mysteries of the black art :—

“ Questa citta di Tolletto solea,  
Tenere studio di Negromanzia,  
Quivi di magica arte si leggea  
Publicamente, et di Peromanzia ;  
E molti Geomanti sempre avea  
E sperimenti assai de Tetremanzia.”

*Morg. Mag. c. 25.*

Having perfected himself in the mysteries of magic, the enchanter assisted Marsirius, King of Spain, in his wars with the Amiral of Persia, and availed himself of his incantations to forward and conceal his own intrigue with the queen. He also aided Arnaud of Montcler in his contest with Charlemagne, deceiving the enemy by fascinating their eyes, or entering the hostile camp in various disguises, after the manner of Merlin.

The story of the enchantments and amours of Maugis is prosecuted in *The Conquest of Trebizond*, by Rinaldo.<sup>1</sup> This romance opens

with an account of a magnificent tournament proclaimed by Charlemagne, to which Rinaldo comes incognito, and bears away all the honour and prizes. At length the ceremony is interrupted by an embassy from the King of Cappadocia, announcing his intentions of embarking for France in order to joust with all the knights of Charlemagne. Rinaldo, however, anticipates his design, and having landed in Cappadocia, overthrows and deposes its monarch. Maugis, who had accompanied Rinaldo, meanwhile engaged in an intrigue with the daughter of the King of Cyprus. His amour was detected by a dwarf, who revealed it to the king. It is true the princess burnt the dwarf, but this could not prevent her father from besieging Maugis in a citadel into which he had thrown himself. The Emperor of Trebizond aided the King of Cyprus, and Rinaldo came to the assistance of Maugis. The allied monarchs were defeated and slain in a great battle, after which Rinaldo was elected by the army Emperor of Trebizond. This romance is the foundation of the Italian poem entitled “*Trabisona nel quale si tratta nobillissime battaglie con la vita e morte de Rinaldo.*”

Maugis continues to act a distinguished part in the popular romance of the Four Sons of Aymon,<sup>2</sup> which was taken from a metrical tale written by Huon de Villeneuve as far back as the 13th century. In the prose work there is detailed the events of a war carried on by Charlemagne against the four brothers, in revenge for the loss of his nephew, who had been slain by Rinaldo, a contest in which Maugis renders, by his usual arts, the most powerful assistance to his rebellious kinsmen. There is also an account of the reiterated treasons of Gano, and the victories which Rinaldo gains over the Saracen invaders of the dominions of Yvon, King of Gascony, who bestows on his champion the castle of Montauban and his sister Clarice, which, it will be recollected, is the name of the heroine in the Rinaldo of Tasso. At length this celebrated paladin retired to a hermitage; but, for the sake of occasional exercise, hired him-

<sup>1</sup> *La Conquete de tres puissant Empire de Trebissonde, par Renaud de Montauban.—Paris, sans date, 4to.*

<sup>2</sup> *Quatre fils Aymon, Paris, 1525, folio.*



self out as a mason. His piety drew on him the hatred of his fellow-labourers, and one day, while he was praying at the bottom of the wall of a church which they were building, they threw on his head an enormous stone, by which he was slain before he had completed his devotions.

The concluding scenes of the life of Maugis are exhibited in the *Chronicle of Mabrian*. Like his cousin Rinaldo, this enchanter had retired to a hermitage; he emerges, however, from this seclusion, and repairs to Rome, where he attracts so much notice by his eloquence and the sanctity of his manners, that on the death of Leo he is raised to the pontifical chair. He soon, however, abdicates his new-acquired dignity, and again betakes himself to the hermitage. About this time Richardette, the youngest brother of Rinaldo,

was assassinated by the treachery of Gano. Alard and Guichard, his two surviving brothers, suspecting that the crime had been committed by the command, or with the connivance, of Charlemagne, publicly insult their sovereign, and after this imprudence fly for refuge to the hermitage of Maugis. The emperor having discovered the place of their retreat, kindled faggots at the entrance of the cavern, and smoked the heroes to death.

There also exists a French romance concerning Charlemagne and the family of Aymon, entitled *Morgant le Geant*, the incidents of which correspond precisely with those of the *Morgante Maggiore* of Pulci. It is probable, however, that the romance was translated from the poem, as it was not customary with the Italians to versify so closely the lying productions of preceding fablers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With the class of romances relating to Charlemagne we may range the well-known story of Valentine and Orson, which was written during the reign of Charles VIII., and was first printed in 1495, at Lyons, in folio.

There are a few romances of chivalry concerning French knights, which cannot properly be classed among those connected with Charlemagne and his paladins. Of these the only one worth mentioning is *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré*, which was composed in the middle of the 15th century by Anthony de la Sale, a Burgundian author, and printed in 1517 and 1723. Tressan says, that this work gives a great deal of insight into the manners of the age and customs of the French court; in short, that it may be considered as the most national of all the French romances. "I have not seen," says Warton, "any French romance which has preserved the practices of chivalry more copiously than *Saintré*. It must have been an absolute master-piece for the rules of tilting, martial customs, and public ceremonies prevailing in the author's age."—WARTON'S *Hist. of Eng. Poet.* vol. i. p. 334.

Baudouin, or Baldwin, Count of Flanders, is the hero of another romance, which may be here mentioned. This count is represented as inflamed with such excessive pride, that he refused the daughter of the King of France in marriage. One day, while hunting in a forest, he met a lady of majestic stature, arrayed in magnificent attire, who accosted him, and declared that she was the heiress of a splendid throne in Asia; but that she had fled from the court of her father to avoid a marriage which was disagreeable to her. The count, incited by love and ambition, espoused and carried her to the French court. When a year had elapsed, the Asiatic princess brought him two beautiful daughters; yet Baldwin, though

in the enjoyment of great domestic felicity, awaited with much impatience the return of a courier he had despatched to the dominions of his royal father-in-law. Meanwhile a hermit having obtained admittance to the presence of the count, expressed his doubts as to the existence of this Asiatic empire, and concluded with begging leave to dine in company with the princess. The request being complied with, when the other guests are seated at table the hermit enters the apartment, and, without farther exordium, commands the landlady to return to the hell whence she had originally issued. This mode of address, which unfortunately none of the count's visitors had hitherto thought of employing at his board, has the desired effect on the hostess, who vanishes with hideous yells, but not without doing irreparable damage both to the dwelling and the dinner.

The fact is, that Baldwin, as a punishment for his pride, had been unwittingly married to the devil. The remainder of the romance is occupied with a crusade performed by the husband, as an expiation for this unfortunate connection, and with the adventures of his two daughters, who turn out better than could have been anticipated from their diabolical descent.

Unions of the description formed in this romance were not only common fictions, but were credited by the vulgar. It was at one time generally believed that an ancestor of Geoffrey of Plantagenet had espoused a demon, and from this alliance Fordun accounts for the profligacy of King John. Andrew of Wyntoun, in his *Orygynale Cronykil* of Scotland, attributes a similar origin to Macbeth; and a story founded on this species of connection is related as a fact in the 35th chapter of Luther's *Colloquia Mensalia*. This superstition, indeed, appears to have



The romances of the second class, or those which relate to Charlemagne, so closely resemble the fictions concerning Arthur and his knights of the Round Table, that the same, or nearly the same, observations apply to both. The foundations of each are laid from supposed histories: Arthur wars against the Saxons, and Charlemagne against the Saracens; both princes are unhappy in their families, and sometimes unsuccessful in their undertakings. In each class of compositions the characters of these sovereigns are degraded below their historical level, for the purpose of giving greater dignity and relief to their paladins and chivalry; since otherwise the monarchs would have been the only heroes, and the different warriors would not have appeared in their proper light. But, by lowering as it were the sovereign princes, the writers of romance delineated the manners of their times, and pleased perhaps those haughty barons, who took delight in representations of vassals superior in prowess and in power to their lords. The authors of the romances concerning Charlemagne wrote under considerable disadvantages: the ground had been already occupied by their predecessors, and they could do little more than copy their pictures of tented fields, and

existed in all ages and countries, and seems one of the most prevalent to which mankind have been addicted. The Jewish Rabbins believed in an intercourse between the fallen angels and daughters of the children of men; in particular, they believed that Cain was the progeny of the devil, having been the offspring of the woman and the serpent. The marriage, however, of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, above related, and other unions of a similar description seem to have been suggested by the story of Menippus, in Philostratus' *Life of Appollonius of Tyana*. A young man, called Menippus, while travelling in the neighbourhood of Corinth, was accosted by a beautiful woman, who said she was a Phœnician, and avowed she was captivated with his love. She assured him that she was possessed of ample revenues, and was proprietor of a magnificent palace in the vicinity of Corinth, where they might reside in the indulgence of every imaginable luxury and pleasure. Menippus went with her to this abode in the evening, continued for some time to frequent her society, and at length fixed on a day for the celebration of the nuptial ceremony. Meanwhile the philosopher Appollonius remarking some peculiarities in the aspect of Menippus, thus addressed him:—"I perceive plainly, O Menippus, that you harbour or are harboured by a serpent." Menippus

their method of dissecting knights and giants. On the other hand, circumstances were, in some degree, more favourable to them than to the authors of the fictions concerning Arthur and the companions of the Round Table. The Saracens were a more romantic people than the Saxons; and tales of eastern fairies and eastern magnificence offered new pictures to delight and astonish the mind. "The knights of Charlemagne," says Sismondi, "no longer wandered, like those of the Round Table, through gloomy forests, in a country half civilized, and which seemed always covered with storms and snow. All the softness and perfumes of regions most favoured by nature were now at the disposal of romancers; and an acquisition still more precious was the imagination of the east,—that imagination so brilliant and various, which was employed to give animation to the sombre mythology of the north. Magnificent palaces now arose in the desert: enchanted gardens or groves, perfumed with orange trees and myrtles, bloomed amidst burning sands, or barren rocks surrounded by the sea." All these are much less agreeable than genuine pictures of life and nature; but they are better, at least, than descriptions of continual havoc, and the un-

replied, "that serpent or not, he was to espouse her on the morrow." Appollonius invited himself to the nuptial banquet: during the entertainment he positively declared the golden vessels, precious furniture, and delicious viands to be accursed delusion and phantom, and he denounced the lady as a Lamia, who devoured those whom she attracted by her charms. The bride entreated him to change the subject of conversation, but Appollonius persisting in his invective, she in turn began to revile the philosophers and sophists. Meanwhile the furniture was disappearing, and the viands were perceptibly melting away, on which the bride burst into tears, and begged to be excused from revealing her name and lineage. The philosopher, however, whom she had irritated by her rash attack on the sophists, was inexorable, and would not be satisfied till she explicitly confessed that she was, in truth, a confirmed Lamia, who had inveigled Menippus merely for the pleasure of devouring him, a privilege she would have enjoyed as soon as the nuptial ceremony was completed. She farther admitted, that she was much in the use of this practice, which gave her special delight. Menippus was a good deal surprised, thanked Appollonius for this deliverance, and became in future more circumspect in his amours.



provoked slaughter of giants. Of all kinds of warfare the *gigantomachia* is, in truth, the least interesting, as we invariably anticipate what will be the final lot of the giant, who, from the unlucky precedent of the Titans and Goliah, has constantly fallen under the arm of his adversary. Indeed, in proportion to his bulk and stature, his destruction appears always the more easy and his fate more certain. Butler pronounces it to be a heavy case, that a man should have his brains knocked out for no other reason than because.

he is tall and has large bones; but the case seems still harder, that strength and stature, while they provoked aggression, should have been of no service in repelling it, and that a giant's power and prowess should have proved of no avail except to his antagonist. In this respect, however, it must be confessed, that the book of nature differs little from the volumes of chivalry, since, while the race of mites and moths remain, the mammoth and *megatherion* are swept away.

## CHAPTER V.

Romances of the Peninsula concerning Amadis de Gaul and his Descendants—Romances relating to the imaginary Family of the Palmerins—Catalonian Romances—Tirante the White—Partenopex de Blois.

THE reader, who has now toiled through the romances of the Round Table, and those relating to Charlemagne, has not yet completed the whole of his labour:—

Alter erit nunc Tiphys, et altera quae vehat Argo  
Delectos heroas: erunt etiam altera bella.

VIRG. *Ecl.* 4.

Had it been my intention, indeed, merely to compose a pleasing miscellany, I should not only refrain from analysing any other romances of chivalry, but should even have omitted many of which an abstract has been given. But the value of a work of the description which I have undertaken, consists, in a considerable degree, in its fulness. The multiplicity of the productions of any species is evidence of the kind of literature which was in fashion at the time of their composition, and therefore indicates the taste of the age. Even the dulness of the fictions of chivalry is, in some degree, instructive, as acquainting us with the monotonous mode of life which prevailed during the periods which gave them birth; while, at the same time, by a comparison of the intellectual powers exhibited in romance with the exertions of the same ages in law, theology, and other pursuits, we are enabled to form an estimate of the employment of genius in those distant periods, and to be-

hold in what arts and sciences it was most successfully displayed.

While the other European nations were so much occupied with romance writing, it was not to be expected that the Portuguese and Spaniards should have altogether neglected a species of composition so fascinating in itself, and at this time so much in vogue. The subject of Arthur, and the topics connected with Charlemagne, had been exhausted, and it was now requisite to find a new chief and a new race of heroes. Arthur had been selected as a leader in romance, less perhaps from national vanity than from being in possession of some traditional glory, and thus forming a kind of head and support, by which unity was given to the adventures of subordinate knights. Charlemagne was naturally adopted by the romance writers of the neighbouring country as having many analogies with Arthur. In Portugal, however, where we shall find the first great romance of the series on which we are now entering was formed, there seems to have been no prince nor leader who was thus clothed with traditional fame. Accordingly an imaginary hero was chosen, and, as the first romance which was written in the peninsula was possessed of great literary merit, it had an overpowering and subduing effect on



succeeding fablers. In imitation of the former author, they continued the family history, supposing, perhaps, that the interest which had been already excited on the subject, which formed the source of their works, would be favourable to their success. This also furnished a certain facility of magnifying their heroes, as it was not difficult to represent each new descendant as surpassing his predecessor. Unfortunately the successive writers of romance supposed that what had pleased once must please always; in the same manner as it was long thought necessary that an epic writer should have in his poem the same number of books as Homer, and should employ the same forms of address, comparison, and description. Accordingly the heroes of most romances of the peninsula are illegitimate; there are usually two brothers, a Platonist and Materialist; and, in short, a general sameness of character and incident. The opponents of the knights are, however, different from those in the romances of Arthur or Charlemagne; they are no longer the Saxons or Saracens, but the Turks; and as the Greek empire was now trembling to its base, many of the scenes of warfare are laid at Constantinople. In some of the concluding romances of the series, indeed, happier fictions are introduced, and an attempt is made to vary with new incidents, and the splendour of eastern enchantments, the perpetual havoc which occurs in the preceding fables. But I am, perhaps, anticipating too much the reflections of the reader, and shall therefore, without farther delay, proceed to

#### AMADIS DE GAUL,<sup>1</sup>

which has generally been considered as one of the finest and most interesting romances of chivalry. Hence, perhaps, different nations have anxiously vindicated to themselves the credit of its origin. Lopez de Vega, in his *Fortunas de Diana*, attributes it to a Portuguese lady. On the authority of Nicholas Antonio, Warton has assigned the composition of Amadis de Gaul to Vasco Lobeira, a Portuguese officer, who died at Elvas in 1403, or,

according to Sismondi,<sup>2</sup> in 1325. This opinion has been also adopted by Mr Southey, who has entered at considerable length into the reasons on which it is grounded. The original work he believes to be lost, but he conceives that Amadis was first written in the Portuguese language; and he argues that Lobeira was the author, from the concurrent testimony of almost all Portuguese writers, particularly of Gomes Eannes de Zurrara, in his chronicle of Don Pedro de Menezes, which appeared only half a century after the death of Lobeira. He also thinks the Portuguese origin of the romance is established from a sonnet by an uncertain poet, but a contemporary of Lobeira, praising him as the author, and from the circumstance that in the Spanish version by Montalvo, it is mentioned that the infant Don Alphonso of Portugal had ordered some part of the story to be altered.

The French writers, on the other hand, and particularly the Comte de Tressan, in his preface to the *Traduction libre d'Amadis de Gaule*, have insisted that the work (or at least the three first of the four books it contains) was originally written in French, in the reign of Philip Augustus, or one of his predecessors. His arguments rest on some vague assertions in old French manuscripts, that Amadis had been at one time extant, and on the similarity of the manners, and even incidents, described in Amadis, with those of Tristan and Lancelot, which are avowedly French: he thinks it also improbable that while such hatred subsisted between the French and Spaniards, an author of the latter nation should have chosen a Gallic knight for his favourite hero; but this argument strikes only against a Spanish and not a Portuguese original. To the reasons of Tressan, however, may be added the testimony of one Portuguese poet, Cardoso, who says that Lobeira translated Amadis from the French by order of the Infant Don Pedro, son of Joan First; and also the assertion of D'Herberay, a translator of Amadis from the Spanish into French, about the middle of the 16th century, who declares that he had seen

<sup>1</sup> Los quatro libros del Cavallero Amadis de Gaula.

<sup>2</sup> De la Literature du midi de l'Europe



fragments of a MS. in the Picard language, which seemed to be the original of Amadis de Gaul :—"J' en ay trouvé encore quelque reste d' un viel livre, escrit a la main, en langage Picard, sur lequel J' estime que les Espagnols ont fait leur traduction, non pas du tout suyvnt la vrai original comme l' on pourra veoir par cestuy, car ils en ont obmis en aucuns endroits et augmenté aux autres." The testimony of Bernardo Tasso, author of the *Amadigi*, a poem taken from the romance, is also against a peninsular origin. To his evidence considerable weight is due, as he lived at a period of no great distance from the death of Lobeira, and from being engaged in a poem on the subject of Amadis, he would naturally be accurate and industrious in his researches. Now the Italian bard is decidedly of opinion that the romance of Amadis has been taken from some ancient English or Breton history. "*Non e dubbio*," (says he in one of his letters to Girolamo Ruscelli,) "che lo scrittore di questa leggiadra e vaga invenzione l' ha in parte cavata da qualche istoria di Bertagna, e poi abbelitola e rendutala a quella vaghezza che il mondo cosi diletta;" (vol. ii. let. 166,) and again, "Gaula in lingua Inglese dalla quale e cavata quest' Istoria vuol dir Francia," (vol. ii. let. 93).

It also appears from various passages of the letters of B. Tasso, that as much doubt and misapprehension existed with regard to the country of the hero as concerning the original author of the romance. He says that the *refabricator* of the work from the British history thought that Gaul meant Wales, and that he had erroneously styled his hero Amadis of Gaul, "per non avere inteso quel vocabulo Gaules, il qual nella lingua Inglese vuol dir Gallia." But Gualles signifying Gallia, or France, Tasso concludes that France was the country of Amadis; he therefore resolves to call his poem *Amadigi di Francia*, and expresses his confidence that the reasons he has assigned will be sufficient, "a divellere questo invecchiato abuso dall' opinione degli uomini." This general opinion, that Wales was the country of Amadis, was not an unnatural one, since Gaules and Gaula, in old English, was the name for Wales as well as France :—"I say Gallia and Gaul—French and Welsh—soul-curer and body-curer," ex-

claims the host in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* (act iii. scene i.) while addressing the French doctor and the Welsh parson. There are also several circumstances in the romance itself, which might have led to the mistake. Thus Amadis proceeding from Gaul to the court of the king of England, which was then held at Vindilisora (Windsor) sails to a goodly city in Great Britain, called Brestoya (Bristol), a strange port to land at in crossing from France to England, but a very convenient harbour for one proceeding from South Wales to Windsor. On the whole, however, Tasso seems right in supposing that by Gaula the author of Amadis meant France; for we are told in the course of the work, that Perion, king of Gaul, and father of Amadis, summons to a council the bishops and lords of his kingdom, commanding them to bring the most celebrated clerks in their respective districts, and two members of the counsel were in consequence attended by Clerk Ungan of Picardy, and Alberto of Champagne.

Though the Spaniards do not lay any claim to the original composition of this romance, nor to its hero as their countryman, the most ancient impression of it now extant is in their language, and was printed in 1526, at Seville. This work was compiled from detached Spanish fragments, which had appeared in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella. It was subsequently revised and compared with the old manuscript fragments by Garcias Ordognez de Montalvo, who at length published an amended edition in 1547, at Salamanca. From the prior edition of 1526, D'Herberay formed his translation of the four books of Amadis, dedicated to Francis I., and printed 1540. To these he added other four books containing the exploits of the descendants of Amadis, which were drawn from Spanish originals: the family history was subsequently carried to the twenty-fourth book by translators who also wrought from Spanish originals, but sometimes added interpolations of their own; and the whole received the name of Amadis de Gaul, which was the title of all the peninsular prototypes. The first books, which relate peculiarly to the exploits of Amadis, were compressed by the Count de Tressan, in his free translation, into two volumes 12mo. His labour was entirely useless, as he has



in a great measure, changed the incidents of the romance, and hid the genuine manners and feelings of chivalry under the varnish of French sentiment. A late version by Mr Southey is greatly preferable, as the events are there accurately related, and the manners faithfully observed.

The era of the exploits of Amadis is prior to the age of Arthur or Charlemagne, and he is the most ancient as well as the most fabulous of all heroes of chivalry. He is said in the romance to have been the illegitimate offspring of Perion, King of Gaul, and Elisena, Princess of Britany. The mother, to conceal her shame, exposed the infant, soon after his birth, in a cradle, which was committed to the sea. He was picked up by a knight of Scotland, who was returning from Britany to his own country, and who reared him under the name of Child of the Sea. When twelve years of age he was sent to be educated at the court of the King of Scotland. There a mutual attachment was formed between him and Oriana, who was daughter of Lisuarte, King of England, but had been sent to Scotland on account of the commotions in her own country. After Amadis had received the honour of knighthood, he proceeded to the succour of Perion, King of Gaul, who by this time had espoused Elisena, and had become the father of another son, named Galaor. This second child had been stolen by a giant, who wished to educate him according to his own system ; but Perion was consoled for the loss by the recognition of Amadis, who was discovered to be his son by means of a ring, which had been placed on his finger when he was exposed. His parents derived the greater satisfaction from this acknowledgment, as Amadis had already proved his valour by the overthrow of the King of Ireland, who had invaded Gaul,—an exploit similar to that with which it may be recollected Tristan began his career.

It is impossible to give any account of the adventures of Amadis after his return to England, though they only divide the romance with those of his brother Galaor—the wars of extermination he carried on against giants—the assistance he afforded to Lisuarte against the usurper Barsinan and the enchanter Arcalaus—his long retirement under the name of

Beltenebros to a hermitage, after receiving a cruel letter from his mistress Oriana, one of the chief points of Don Quixote's fantastic imitation—the battles he fought, after quitting this abode, against Cildadan, King of Ireland—the defeat of a hundred knights, by whom Lisuarte had been attacked ; and, finally, his innumerable exploits in Germany and in Turkey, when the jealousy and suspicion of Lisuarte, excited by evil counsellors, had forced him to leave Oriana and the court of England.

Amadis returned, however, in sufficient time to rescue his beloved princess from the power of the Romans, to whose ambassadors Lisuarte had given her up, to be espoused by the emperor's brother. Their fleet having been intercepted by Amadis, and totally defeated, Oriana was conveyed to the Firm Island by her lover. A long war was then carried on betwixt Lisuarte and Amadis, in which the former was worsted ; and when weakened by two dreadful battles, he was unexpectedly attacked by an old enemy, Aravigo, who was urged on by the enchanter Arcalaus. When in this dilemma, he was saved by the generosity of Amadis, who having turned to his assistance the arms he had lately employed against him, defeated his enemies, slew Aravigo, and took Arcalaus prisoner. On account of this conduct, and a discovery that the delights of matrimony had been anticipated, Lisuarte consented to the formal union of his daughter with Amadis. Their nuptials were celebrated on the Firm Island, and Oriana terminated the wonderful enchantments of that spot, by entering the magic apartment, which could only be approached by the fairest and most faithful woman in the world.

The notion of a chamber, a tower, or island, accessible only to a certain hero or beauty, and which occurs in many of the subsequent books of Amadis, is evidently derived from oriental fiction, which, as naturally to be expected, abounds more in the romances of the peninsula, than in those of France or England. We are told in an eastern story, that Abdal-malek, fifth caliph of the Omniades, and one of the first who invaded Spain, arrived at a castle erected by the fairies, on one of the most remote mountains in Spain. The gate was secured, not by a lock, but by a dragon's



tooth, and over it was an inscription, which imported that it was accessible to none but Abdalmalek.

But while eastern fictions have supplied some magical adventures, especially towards the conclusion of the work, the earlier and greater part of Amadis de Gaul is occupied with combats, which are generally described with much spirit, yet are tiresome by frequent repetition; and at length scarcely interest us, as we become almost certain of the success of the hero from the frequent recurrence of victory.

Though the story does not lead us, like many other romances, through the adventures of a multitude of knights, changing without method from one to another, it suspends our attention between the exploits of Amadis and those of his brother Galaor.

Amadis excels the French romances of chivalry in the delineation of character. There is much sweetness in the account of the infancy and boyhood of the Child of the Sea, and the early attachment betwixt him and Oriana. This princess, however, proves to be of weak intellect and peevish disposition, and is frequently disquieted with ill-founded jealousy. Amadis is an interesting character, and is well distinguished from his brother Galaor; they are equally valiant, but the elder wants the gaiety of the younger; he also remains faithfully attached to one mistress, while Galaor is constantly changing the object of his affections, a fraternal contrast which has been exhibited in most of the Spanish romances relating to the descendants of Amadis.

In the morals displayed, and in the general conduct of the incidents, these continuations are much inferior to the work which they follow, but they become, as they advance, more splendid in their decorations, and more imposing in their machinery. The Urganda of the original Amadis, as Mr Southey remarks, is a true fairy, like Morgaine le Fay, and the Lady of the Lake; but the Urganda, who, in the subsequent books of Amadis, sails about in the Green Serpent, is an enchantress of a more formidable description, and her

rivals, Zirfea and Melia, are as tremendous as the Medea of classical mythology.

Of this series of fictions, the first romance is the *EXPLOITS OF ESPLANDIAN*,<sup>1</sup> the son of Amadis, the greater part of which is the work of Montalvo, the Spanish translator of Amadis. In order to shelter himself under a popular name, the author called it the fifth book of Amadis; on which it thus became the burden and excrescence. This example was imitated by the followers of Montalvo—the history of Lisuarte formed the seventh and eighth books, and that of Amadis of Greece the ninth and tenth of Amadis de Gaul. The Spanish romancers thus proceeded from generation to generation; and, in order to give some plausibility to the title they bestowed, they kept Amadis himself alive, who thus became the perennial prop of his otherwise insupportable descendants.

None of the progeny degenerated more from the merits of the parent than his immediate successor Esplandian; and Cervantes, who tolerated Amadis de Gaul as the first and best of the kind, hath most justly decreed, “that the excellence of the father should not avail the son, but that he should be thrown into the court to give a beginning to the bonfire.”

The part of Amadis de Gaul, however, which contains an account of the infancy of Esplandian, is one of the most beautiful portions of that romance. Oriana having given birth to a son, the fruit of her stolen interviews with Amadis, delivered the child to her confidants, that he might be conveyed to a remote part of the country for the sake of concealment. Those to whom the infant was entrusted, in order to travel more privately, struck into a forest. A lioness, which resided in this quarter, made free to carry off the child as provender for her whelps. Unfortunately for them she had a respectable hermit for a neighbour, who met and rebuked her before she reached the den with her prey. She was quite disconcerted at being thus unexpectedly caught, and, at length, by her good neighbour's seasonable remonstrances, was brought to a better way of thinking, and was induced to undertake the office of nurse to

<sup>1</sup> Quinto libro d' Amadis de Gaula, o las Sergas dell cavallero Esplandian hijo d' Amadis de Gaula. —Seville, 1542. Saragossa, 1587. Sergas is probably

a corruption of the plural of the Greek word *Ergon* (opus), corresponding to *hechos* in Spanish.



the child, who was now conveyed to the hermitage. There Esplandian was accordingly suckled with much blandishment by the reformed lioness, and when she went to prowl, her place was supplied by an ewe and a she-goat. Other heroes of chivalry, it may be recollected, were fostered in a similar manner; fictions, no doubt, suggested by the classical fable of Romulus and Remus.

As Esplandian grew up, the lioness acted as a dry nurse; she guarded him when he walked out from the hermitage, and afterwards accompanied him in the chase.

One day King Lisuarte, in the course of his field sports, entered the forest where Esplandian was bred up by the hermit and the motherly lioness, and perceived the boy leading in a leash this animal, which he loosed, when a stag was started, and hallooed her to the prey. When the game was overtaken, the lioness and two spaniels had their shares of the spoil. The king was surprised at beholding this singular group, and Esplandian being carried to the verge of the forest, where the queen had pitched her pavilion, was recognized by Oriana as her son, by means of certain characters on his breast. In the subsequent romances, the descendants of Esplandian are usually discovered by some inscription of this nature, or other personal mark, as a cross or flaming sword, an awkward alteration on the Greek romances, where children are identified by certain articles of apparel or decoration, which they wore at the time of their loss or exposure.

Esplandian was brought up at the court of King Lisuarte, and was in due time admitted into the order of knighthood. The romance, which is appropriated to his exploits, commences immediately after this inauguration. During a sleep, into which he fell soon after the ceremony, he was carried, with his squire, by means of Urganda the Unknown, to that incomprehensible machine the Ship of the Great Serpent, wherein he was conveyed to the foot of a castle, the enchantments of which he was destined to terminate.

Thence, under the name of the Black Knight (an appellation bestowed from the colour of his armour), he sailed to the Forbidden Mountain, a stronghold on the confines of Turkey and Greece, and which, in this

romance, is the chief theatre of exploits. Esplandian took possession of it in behalf of the Greek emperor, having slain its former gigantic and heathenish proprietors. He did not, however, long occupy this fortress in quiet, as it was soon besieged by Armato, the soldan of the Turks, with a great army. But Esplandian had now additional motives to exert himself in behalf of the Greek emperor. Leonorina, the emperor's daughter, and our knight, though they had never met, had become mutually enamoured, and maintain, during the romance, an interchange of amatory embassies. Armato, instead of recovering possession of the Forbidden Mountain, was defeated and made prisoner. Encouraged by this success, Esplandian carried the war into the heart of Turkey, and took the principal city. Hearing, however, that his mistress was offended at his neglect in not having come to visit her, he departed for Constantinople; and on the night of his arrival was privately conveyed into her apartment in a cedar coffer, of which he had requested her acceptance.

On his return the war was prosecuted against the Turks with new vigour. The Christians were assisted by Urganda, who, in all his adventures, had highly favoured Amadis, and extends her protection to his latest posterity. On the other hand, the infidels were supported by the enchantress Melia, the sister of Armato. That soldan having effected his escape from confinement on the back of a dragon, which had been provided by his sister, speedily raised an immense army, and besieged Constantinople. He was aided by all the eastern caliphs and soldans, and especially by an Amazonian queen, who brought, as her contingent, a flight of fifty prime griffins, well equipped, which flew over the bulwarks of the city, and committed internal devastations. The Greeks, on their part, were assisted by Amadis de Gaul and the western potentates. After a protracted warfare, it was agreed that the contest should be settled by a double combat. Amadis and his son Esplandian were selected on the one side; the Amazonian queen and a choice soldan on the other. The latter were worsted, yet, notwithstanding the agreement, the Paynim army attacked the Christians, but was totally defeated and expelled the Greek dominions. The emperor then resigned



his kingdom in favour of Esplandian, who espoused Leonorina, daughter of the abdicated monarch.

Now, after a time, Urganda by her great knowledge discovered that Amadis, Galaor, Esplandian, and all her favourite knights, were in a short time to pay the debt of nature. She therefore sent for them to the Firm Island, and informed them that the only way to escape mortality, was to remain in the dormant state into which she could throw them, till disenchanted by Lisuarte, son of Esplandian, acquiring possession of a certain magic sword, when they would all spring to life with renovated vigour.

Thus, although new heroes are always rising on the stage, the reader never gets free of the old ones. They subsist through the whole romance of

#### LISUARTE OF GREECE,<sup>1</sup>

son of Esplandian and Leonorina, who was destined to recall them to their former iniquitude. His exploits occupy the seventh and eighth books of Amadis, which are said to have been written by Juan Diaz, bachelor of canon law. Perion, who was son of Amadis de Gaul and Oriana, and born after their legal union, is the second character in this romance, which commences with the account of a voyage undertaken by Perion, from England to Ireland, in order to be dubbed a knight by the king of the latter country. On his way he is separated from his followers by a lady cruising in a boat managed by four apes, who insist that he should accompany their mistress, for the fulfilment of a great emprise. His attendants proceed to Constantinople, where they report his adventure, and Lisuarte, in consequence, sets out in quest of his kinsman Perion. This prince had meanwhile arrived in Trebizond, and fallen in love with one of the emperor's daughters: he had not, however, leisure to prosecute his suit, as She of the Apes hurries him away to accomplish the enterprise he had undertaken.

Soon after his departure, Lisuarte also arrived in Trebizond, and fell in love with

Onoloria, the emperor's other daughter: but while enjoying himself in the society of his mistress, a lady of gigantic stature came to court, and asked from Lisuarte a gift. This, as usual, was promised without any inquiries as to its nature, and it proved to be the attendance of Lisuarte for a twelvemonth, wherever she chose to demand. Now this lady was in the interest of the pagans, and had fallen on this device to remove Lisuarte, who was the chief support of the Grecian throne. The emperor of Trebizond was informed of her stratagem soon after the departure of Lisuarte, by a letter which was closed with sixty-seven seals, and which also announced that Constantinople was about to be besieged by Armato, the Turkish soldan, who had placed himself at the head of a league of sixty-seven princes—a coalition ingeniously denoted by the number of seals.

Lisuarte, meanwhile, was delivered in charge to the king of the Giants' Isle, whose daughter Gradaffile fell in love with the prisoner, procured his escape, and followed him to Constantinople. There Lisuarte performed many feats of valour in combating the pagan enemies by whom the city was now besieged, and was soon assisted in the defence by Perion, who arrived in Greece after having accomplished the enterprise in which he had been so long engaged. At length Lisuarte having obtained possession of the fatal sword, Amadis de Gaul, Esplandian, and the Grecian princes burst the enchantment into which they had been lulled by Urganda, in the Firm Island. The city being relieved by the return of these potent and refreshed auxiliaries, Lisuarte set out for Trebizond, but, on his way thither, met with various adventures which detained him. Perion arrived before him, but left Trebizond for a time, at the request of the Duchess of Austria, whom he restored to her dominions, and received from her the highest reward she could bestow. In this romance Lisuarte is the Amadis, or constant lover, Perion, the Galaor or general lover. Perion, however, differs from his prototype in this, that Galaor was altogether undistinguishing in his amours, and had no

<sup>1</sup> Chronica de los famosos esforcados cavalleros Lisuarte de Grecia, hijo d' Esplandian; y de Perion

de Gaul, hijo d' Amadis de Gaula.—*Seville*, 1525, folio.



preference for any mistress; whereas Perion, though guilty of occasional infidelities, still retains the first place in his affections for the princess of Trebizond.

At length Perion and Lisuarte meet at the palace of their mistresses, who, as usual, admit their lovers to the privileges, before they have possessed the characters, of husbands. It afterwards occurred to them to send ambassadors to Esplandian and Amadis de Gaul, to talk of their nuptials; but, meanwhile, the emperor of Trebizond and Perion were carried off by pagan wiles, during a hunting match; and Lisuarte having gone in quest of them, came to the spot where they were detained, and was imprisoned in the same confinement.

While her lover Lisuarte thus remained in durance, the princess of Trebizond gave birth to a son, afterwards known by the name of

#### AMADIS OF GREECE,<sup>1</sup>

whose adventures, blended with those of his sempiternal ancestry, form the ninth book of the family history, which is feigned, in the commencement of the second part, to have been imitated in Latin from the Greek, and thence translated into the Romance language:—"Sacada de Griego in Latin, y de Latin en romance, segun lo escrivio el gran sabio Alquife en las magicas."

The imprudent anticipation of Onoloria rendered concealment necessary, and, during the baptism of her infant, which was performed at a retired fountain, he was carried off by corsairs, and sold by them to the Moorish king of Saba (Sheva). It has been remarked, that the lineage of Amadis generally had from infancy some striking personal peculiarity, which, in the untoward circumstances of their birth and childhood, was essential to a future acknowledgment by their parents. Amadis of Greece was distinguishable by the representation of a sword on his breast. Hence, when, at the age of fourteen, he obtained some order of chivalry from the king of Saba, he assumed the name of the Knight of the Flaming Sword. A black courtier being jealous of the favour which He of the Flaming Sword enjoyed with the king,

accused him to his master of a criminal intrigue with the queen. Amadis was obliged privately to escape from the wrath of the incensed monarch, and thus at an early age enters on the career of adventure.

The exploits in this romance commence, as they did in that of Esplandian, at the Forbidden Mountain. Amadis, who was yet an obdurate heathen, defeated and expelled the Christian possessors who held it for the Greeks, and afterwards defended it in single combat against the Emperor Esplandian himself, who came in person to recover that important citadel. After this he fell in with the king of Sicily; their acquaintance commenced with a combat, but Amadis subsequently aided him in various enterprises, to which he was stimulated by the passion he had conceived for this monarch's daughter.

In the course of his navigation to Sicily, Amadis arrived at an island where he disenchanted the emperor of Trebizond, Lisuarte, Perion, and Gradaffile. These princes, and their female companion Gradaffile, as was mentioned in the end of the last romance, had been carried off by pagan stratagems, and were lying in the dormant state into which they had been lulled by the sorcery of a pagan princess, in the same manner, though with different views, that their ancestors had been put to rest by Urganda. When these heroes were completely roused, Amadis de Gaul having set out in quest of adventures, met with the queen of Saba, who was scouring the seas in search of a champion to defend her against the false charge of conjugal infidelity. Amadis espoused her quarrel, and having arrived in Saba, overthrew her accuser, and established to the satisfaction of the king the innocence of his wife, and his *Eleve* of the Flaming Sword.

After the account of this exploit, a considerable portion of the romance is occupied with the unremitting pursuit, by Amadis of Greece, of a knight whom he erroneously imagined to be in love with the princess of Sicily, because he overheard him reciting amorous verses. He long pursued him with unabating animosity, and met with many adventures during his chase; but was at length undeceived at a personal interview, at which he seems to have learned, for the first time,

<sup>1</sup> Amadis de Grecia hijo de Don Lisuarte.—*Burgos*, 1535.



that there could be other subjects of amatory verses besides the princess of Sicily.

While Amadis was thus occupied, his father Lisuarte had returned to Trebizond, and had formally requested the hand of Onoloria. Unfortunately for his pretensions, Zairo, sultan of Babylon, had become enamoured of this princess in a dream, and had arrived at Trebizond, accompanied by his sister Abra, to demand her in marriage. His propositions were much relished by the emperor, but, being of course opposed by Lisuarte, the sultan resorted to warlike measures to obtain possession of Onoloria; he accordingly besieged Trebizond, but the champions he selected to decide his pretensions were defeated by Gradaffile, who appeared in the disguise of a knight. The sultan afterwards forcibly carried off the object of his passion, but his fleet was encountered by Amadis de Gaul, who was sailing to the relief of Trebizond. Onoloria was rescued, and the sultan himself was slain.

Abra, his sister, succeeded to the throne of Babylon. This princess, when she accompanied her brother to Trebizond, had become enamoured of Lisuarte: her suit had been rejected, and the pangs of ill-requited affection, added to the desire of avenging the death of her brother, induced her to raise up knights in all parts of the world to attempt the destruction of Lisuarte. One of her damsels, while on this quest, met with Amadis of Greece, and made him promise to grant her mistress the head of Lisuarte as a gift. Hence, on the arrival of Amadis at Trebizond, there was a dreadful combat between the father and son, which must have terminated fatally to one or other, had it not been broken off by the appearance of Urganda, who now revealed that Amadis was the offspring of Lisuarte.

This, however, was but an incidental exploit on the part of Amadis; his attention had lately been engrossed by objects different from those by which it had been formerly absorbed. Niquea, the daughter of an eastern soldan, had fallen in love with Amadis by report, and had already despatched conciliatory messages, and sent a gift of her portrait by a favourite dwarf. Like the princess in the Persian Tales, Niquea was of such re-

splendent beauty, that all who beheld her died, or at least were deprived of reason. She was in consequence shut up by her father in an almost inaccessible tower, to which her family alone had admittance; and afterwards, to preserve her from the passion of her brother Anastarax, this prince was enclosed by the magician Zirfea in a magic palace, surrounded by impassable flames. The view of the portrait of this beauty overcame the fidelity which Amadis had hitherto preserved to the princess of Sicily. In order to obtain access to his new mistress, Amadis, soon after the period of his late combat with Lisuarte, so arranged matters that he was sold, in the disguise of a female slave, to her father the soldan; he thus obtained admittance to his daughter, and, after a promise of marriage, was received by her in the character of a husband.

Meanwhile, Abra being disappointed in the issue of the combat between Amadis and Lisuarte, assembled a great army, and led it against Trebizond. Her forces were totally defeated, but Onoloria dying about this time, Lisuarte, at the persuasion of Gradaffile, finally agreed to espouse the Babylonian queen.

The situation of Niquea now requiring retirement from a father's observation, she eloped with Amadis, and soon after arrived with him at Trebizond, where she was solemnly espoused, and gave birth to a son, named Florisel de Niquea.

That part of the family history which relates particularly to the exploits of Amadis of Greece, concludes, like the romance of Esplandian, with the enchantment of all the Greek heroes and princesses by Zirfea, in the Tower of the Universe, in order that they might evade the period appointed for their decease. There every thing that passed in the universe was magically exhibited; a display which this assembly while seated in easy chairs, was destined to contemplate at leisure for the ensuing century.

This romance of Amadis of Greece, and all its successors, have suffered the severest censure from Cervantes. "The next, said the barber, is Amadis of Greece, yea, and all these on this side are of the lineage of Amadis. Then into the yard with them all, quoth the



priest, for rather than not burn the queen Pintiquinestra, and the shepherd Darinel, with his eclogues, and the devilish intricate discourses of its author, I would burn the father who begot me, did I meet him in the garb of a knight errant." It is in the tenth book of *Amadis de Gaul*, which is feigned to have been written by Cirfea, queen of the Argives, and which chiefly contains the adventures of

#### FLORISEL DE NIQUEA,<sup>1</sup>

son of Amadis of Greece and Niquea, that the character of Darinel, which seems so strongly to have excited the rage of Cervantes, is exhibited. This shepherd is a new character in romance, being an amorous pastoral buffoon, who is in love with Sylvia, the heroine of the work. Sylvia was the fruit of one of the stolen interviews of Lisuarte and Onoloria; she of course was removed from her parents in her infancy, and had been educated in the vicinity of Alexandria. As she grew up she was beloved by Darinel, a neighbouring swain; but as the fair one exercised unusual rigour towards her lover, he resolved to expose himself to perish on the top of the highest mountain in the empire of Babylon. In this region he met with Florisel, who was at that time residing at the Babylonish court. To this prince Darinel gave such an animated description of the beauty of Sylvia, that he disguised himself as a shepherd, and prevailed on Darinel to conduct him to her abode. Sylvia was as unrelenting to the pretended as she had been to the real shepherd; but, on hearing from Florisel an account of the enchantment of Anastarax, who was still enclosed in his fiery palace, she became enamoured of that prince, and persuaded Florisel, and also Darinel (who had for a time relinquished his scheme of exposure on the top of the highest mountain of Babylon), to set out with her to attempt his deliverance. They departed together, but having arrived at the spot, they understood that this adventure was reserved for Alastraxare, an amazon, who was the fruit of an amour between the queen of Cau-

casus and Amadis of Greece. The achievements of Alastraxare occupy a considerable part of the romance; and in their search for this heroine, the pastoral party met with many adventures, of which the chief is that of Florisel with Arlanda, princess of Thrace, who had fallen in love with him by report, followed him in his travels, and, finally, contrived to gratify her passion, by coming to him in the dusk, disguised in the clothes of Sylvia.

At length Sylvia was separated from Florisel and Darinel during a tempest, and returned to the flaming prison, or hell, as it is called, of Anastarax. There she met Alastraxare, and their united efforts accomplished the disenchantment. Nearly at the same time there arrived at this spot a number of the Greek princes, who were travelling to the Tower of the Universe, to attempt the deliverance of their kindred. Sylvia was then discovered to be the daughter of Lisuarte, and was soon after united to her beloved Anastarax.

Meanwhile Florisel and Darinel had been driven to the coast of Apolonia, where Florisel, forgetting Sylvia, became enamoured of Helena, princess of that country, but was soon forced to leave his new mistress, and, during his absence, accomplished the deliverance of his kindred; an adventure, the completion of which had all along been reserved for him.

On his way back to Apolonia he landed at Colchos, where he met with Alastraxare. Falanges, a Greek knight, and the constant companion of Florisel in his expeditions, fell in love with and finally espoused this amazon. Florisel, on his arrival in Apolonia, found his mistress, Helena, on the eve of a marriage with the Prince of Gaul, an infidelity to which she had been constrained by her father; but Florisel interrupted the marriage ceremony, by carrying off the bride. This rape of the second Helen, as she is termed, produced a great war. The forces of all the potentates of the west of Europe laid siege to Constantinople, and defeated the Greek army, chiefly by aid of the Russians. The savage monarch of that people, however, offended that his assistance had not been solicited by either party, was anxious for the destruction of both. Accordingly the Greeks having made an attempt to retrieve matters, the Russians

<sup>1</sup> El deceno libro de Amadis, que es el cronica de Don Florisel de Niquea, hijo de Amadis de Grecia. — *Valladolid*, 1532.



unexpectedly fell on their former allies, and thus delivered Constantinople from the western invasion, and secured Florisel in the possession of Helena.

Here the romance might have received termination, and the reader repose, but there yet remain two-thirds of the family history, and the adventures of a long series of heroes, who of course must be ushered in by an account of the previous amours of their ancestors. Amadis of Greece, in pursuing the treacherous Russians, to whom his country had been so much indebted, and who set sail immediately after their late notable exploit, was driven on a desert island, where he resolved to stay and do penance, on account of his infidelity to the Princess of Sicily. Here he remained till that princess accidentally landed on the island, and, after the proper expostulations, persuaded him to return to his wife Niquea. Meanwhile the Greek knights, particularly Florisel and Falanges, had set out in quest of Amadis, and had arrived at the isle of Guinday. Sidonia, the queen of this country, proposed to marry Falanges; but, as he was scrupulous in maintaining his fidelity to Alastraxare, Florisel agreed to substitute himself in the place of his friend, and accordingly espoused her majesty under the feigned name of Moraizel. He soon after abandoned his bride, but the effect of this short intercourse was the birth of Diana, the most beautiful of all the princesses of romance, and heroine of the eleventh and twelfth books of this enormous history, which chiefly contain the adventures of

#### AGESILAN OF COLCHOS,

son of Falanges and Alastraxare. A representation of the figure of the incomparable Diana having been rashly exhibited at Athens, where Agesilan was prosecuting his studies, he was inspired with such an irresistible passion, that he repaired, in the disguise of a female minstrel, to the court of Queen Sidonia, the mother of his mistress, and was presented to her daughter as an amusing companion. Here he occasionally entertained the court ladies by the exercise of his musical and poetical talents, but at other times distinguished himself as an amazon, in combating

the knights, who, on various pretexts, came to molest Sidonia. The circumstance of a lover residing with his mistress, and, unknown to her, in disguise of a female, is frequent in subsequent romances, as in the *Arcadia* and *Argenis*, and its origin must be looked for in the story of the concealment of Achilles.

Agesilan at length having sufficiently signalized himself by his exploits, appeared in his real character, and undertook to bring Sidonia the head of Florisel, against whom, since he had married and abandoned her, under the name of Moraizel, she had conceived the most bitter resentment. In prosecution of this scheme, Agesilan repaired to Constantinople, and defied Florisel to mortal fight. It was arranged that this combat should take place in the dominions of Sidonia, but it was there discovered, on the arrival of the champions, that Florisel might be turned to better account by employing him in defence of the island, which had been recently invaded by the Russians. Having got rid of these enemies, Agesilan and Diana were affianced, and the general joy was increased by the arrival of the elder and younger Amadis. The Greek princes then set sail for Constantinople, where it was intended that the nuptials of Agesilan and Diana should be solemnized. A tempest having arisen during the voyage, Agesilan and Diana were separated from the rest of their kindred, and thrown together on a desert rock, where they would have perished, had not a knight mounted on a griffin picked them up, and conveyed them to his residence in the Green Isle, one of the Canaries. Next morning their preserver having become enchanted with the beauty of Diana, privately carried her off to a remote part of the island, and was proceeding to give her the most lively demonstrations of attachment, when she was rescued by corsairs who had accidentally landed, and was conveyed on board their vessel. Agesilan having missed their host, and being also unable to find Diana, set out in quest of her on the griffin. Having in vain surveyed the island from the back of this winged monster, he traversed many other atmospheres, and at length descended in the country of the Garamantes. The king of this region, on account of his pride, had been struck blind, and had been sentenced to have the



food prepared for him devoured by a nauseous dragon, which was now driven off by Agesilan. This story corresponds with that in the *Orlando Furioso* (c. 33. st. 102, &c.), of Senapus, King of Ethiopia, who, on account of his overweening pride, had been deprived of sight, and had his food daily polluted by harpies, till relieved by Astolpho, who descended as from heaven on a winged steed. Besides these circumstances of resemblance, the nations, both in the poem and romance, are of the christian faith, both monarchs reside in the most sumptuous palaces, and both deliverers are mistaken for deities on their descent. The origin of these, as of most other stories of the same sort, is classical, and is derived from the story of Phineus and the Harpies in the *Argonautics* of Apollonius Rhodius:—

There on the margin of the beating flood,  
The mournful mansions of sad Phineus stood :  
Taught by the wise Apollo to descry  
Unborn events of dark futurity,  
Vain of his science, the presumptuous seer  
Deigned not Jove's awful secrets to revere ;  
Hence Jove, indignant, gave him length of days,  
But quenched in endless night his visual rays ;  
Nor would the vengeful god indulge his taste  
With the sweet blessings of a pure repast,  
Though (for they learned his fate), the country  
round  
Their prophet's board with every dainty crowned,  
For, lo ! descending sudden from the sky,  
Round the piled banquet shrieking harpies fly,  
Whose beaks rapacious, and whose talons, tear  
Quick from his famished lips the untasted fare.  
*Faulkes Ap. Rhodius, b. 2.*

The Argonauts touch at the mansion of Phineus on their voyage to Colchos, and two of their number, the winged children of Boreas, deliver the prophet from this disturbance.

After having re-installed the king of the Garamantes in the pleasures of a comfortable meal, Agesilan set out on the farther quest of Diana, and arrived at the Desolate Isle. The god Tervagant had fallen in love with the queen of this country ; but, being balked in his amour, had let loose a band of destructive hobgoblins, who ravaged the land. An oracle of the god declared, that Tervagant would only be appeased, if the inhabitants daily exposed on the sea-shore a fresh beauty, till such time as he found one he liked as well as the queen. As the fair offering to the

fastidious god was every day devoured by a sea-monster, the island was now nearly depopulated, and corsairs were employed to ravage other countries, in quest of victims. Diana had fallen into the hands of this crew, and, on her arrival, was bound to the rock. That very day Agesilan descended on his griffin, and offered his services against the sea-monster. On proceeding to the place of combat, the discovery of the situation of his mistress invigorated his exertions. Having slain the monster after a dreadful combat, he placed his beloved Diana on his hippogriff, and skimmed with her towards Constantinople.

It may be remembered, that in the *Orlando Furioso* (c. 8), Proteus, being offended at the bad treatment the princess of Eubuda had received, in consequence of an affair of gallantry in which she had engaged with him, commissioned herds of marine monsters to depopulate the country, and would only be appeased by a daily offering of a damsel, to glut an ork which was stationed on the shore, in readiness to receive her. Angelica was brought to this country by seamen, who scoured the main for victims, and was bound to the fatal rock when delivered by Ruggiero, who arrived on his winged courser. This, like the story of the blind king and the dragon, is of classical origin, and has been doubtless suggested by the fiction of Perseus and Andromeda.

On his flight to Constantinople, Agesilan spied beneath him the ship of Amadis, from which he had been originally separated, and which was still on its voyage. He dexterously alighted on this vessel, and proceeded with the rest of his kindred to the Grecian capital, where his nuptials were solemnized with Diana.

Agesilan of Colchos is the faithful lover of this part of the family chronicle. Rogel of Greece, whose adventures occupy a considerable part of the romance, is the Galaor, or general lover. He was the son of Florisel and Helena, and is, I think, by far the most rakish of his kindred. It is true he is specially attached to Leonida, a Greek princess, whom he finally marries ; but, at the solicitation of any damsel, he sets out to the relief of her mistress : he usually begins the adventure by an intrigue with the ambassadress,



and concludes by an amour with the lady he had served.

The reader, I presume, does not wish any farther to pursue the involved genealogy of the romantic issue of Amadis, and a few words will bring us to the latest posterity.

Many of the chief heroes of the family of Amadis possess a sentimental and platonic female friend, like the Gradaffile of Lisuarte. Finistea acted in this capacity to Amadis of Greece, and attended him in his long quest of his empress Niquea, who had been carried off while on her way to visit her father. In the course of their peregrinations, Amadis and Finistea came to a desert island, where, having partaken of a certain fruit, they totally divested themselves of their platonic habits, and a son was in consequence produced, who, from the place of his birth, was called

#### SILVIO DE LA SELVA.<sup>1</sup>

This prince first distinguished himself at the siege of Constantinople by the Russians, whose king had lately transmitted, by twelve dwarfs, a defiance to the Grecian princes, in which he mentioned that he had entered into a confederacy with a hundred and sixty eastern monarchs, to burn all the habitations of the Greeks, that they might be re-built on an improved plan by his subjects the Russians. A long account is given of the war, which terminated successfully for the besieged; but they are hardly freed from their Russian foes, when the whole bevy of Greek empresses and princesses are carried off by one fell stroke of necromancy. All the knights and heroes set out in search of them, and meet with the accustomed adventures, in which Silvio de la Selva particularly distinguishes himself. After the princesses are brought back to their own habitations, it is found that, during their absence, many have given birth to children. Spheramond, son of Rogel of Greece, and Amadis of Astre, son of Agesilan, are of the number. When Spheramond and Amadis grow up, they are both sent to Parthia, for it was destined they should be there admitted into the order of chivalry.

<sup>1</sup> Hechos de Silvio de la Selva, hijo de Amadis de Grecia.

Here they fall in love with two Parthian princesses, Rosaliana and Richarda, whom they espouse after they have gone through the requisite number of adventures. Among others, they had been present at a great battle between the Christians and Pagans, who, as usual, had besieged Constantinople. In this combat the king of the Island of Terror was slain on the side of the paynims. His widow resolves to be avenged, and accomplishes her purpose by carrying away the young prince Saphiraman, son of Spheramon and the princess Richarda, as also Hercules d'Astre, son of Amadis d'Astre and Rosaliana. These two princes are shut up in an impregnable tower; and the adventures of different knights who attempt their deliverance are related at great length. This is finally effected by Fulgarine, son of Rogel of Greece; and the family history concludes with the exploits of these princes after they have received their freedom; but what relates to them is chiefly of French invention.

A Spanish romance concerning Flores of Greece, surnamed Knight of the Swan, second son of the Emperor Esplandian, a work also translated by D'Herberay, may be associated to the history of Amadis. The adventures of the Knight of the Sun<sup>2</sup> and his brother Rosclair, may also be considered as belonging to the same series of romance, since Perion, the parent of Amadis de Gaul, was descended from Trebatius, father to the Knight of the Sun. Nicolas Antonio, in one part of his *Bibliotheca Hispaniæ*, says, that the first two books of this romance were written by Diego Ortunes, and elsewhere that they were from the pen of Pedro de la Sierra. A third part was composed by Marcos Martinez, and a fourth by Feliciano de Selva: Nevertheless the work is not finished, and the knights are left under enchantment. Cervantes says it contains something of the inventions of the Italian poet Boiardo; but I imagine the Orlando Innamorato was prior to the Spanish work. The whole romance has been translated into English, under the title of the *Mirroure of Knighthood*, and into French literally from the Spanish, in eight volumes. It has also been compressed into two by the Marquis de

<sup>2</sup> Espejo de principes e cavalleros, o Cavallero del Febo.—*Saragossa*, 1580, 2 vols. folio.



Paulmy, who has used it as a frame, in which he has enclosed what he considered the finest delineations of the whole family picture. The romantic story of the issue of Amadis has been wound up in the *Roman des Romans*, a work originally French, and written by Duverdier.

The fables relating to Amadis de Gaul, and his lineage, often supplied with materials the poets and dramatists of the neighbouring countries. Both the Amadigi and Floridante of Bernardo Tasso are formed on the first work of the series, and innumerable French and Italian dramas have been founded on incidents which occur in Amadis of Greece and Agesilan of Colchos. The romances of the peninsula, however, in general, had less influence on the early literature of this country than either the French romances or Italian novels. This Mr Southey attributes to the wretched manner in which the early translations of them were executed. He has mentioned, however, that in Amadis of Greece may be found the original of the Zelmane of Sidney's *Arcadia*, the Florizel of Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*, and Masque of Cupid in the *Faery Queene*.

Having now discussed the history of Amadis and his descendants, we come to the second family chronicle, carried on in the romances of the peninsula. Of this new series, the first romance, at least considered in relation to the order of events, is

#### PALMERIN DE OLIVA.<sup>1</sup>

There is no dispute concerning the language in which this work was originally written, as there is with regard to so many of the other tales of chivalry belonging to this third class of romances. It first appeared in Spanish, and was printed at Seville, 1525, in folio. A second impression, also in Spanish, was published at Venice in 1526, and is dedicated, in a prologue, to Cæsar Triulsci, who was then learning that language. The work afterwards appeared in 1533, 12mo, also at Venice, corrected by the Spaniard Juan Matheo da Villa, and addressed to the Senor Juan de Nores Conde de Tripoli,

<sup>1</sup> Libro del famoso Cavallero Palmerin de Oliva, y de sus grandes Hechos.

*Embarador dell Universidad de Chipro*, who is told that it is dedicated to him that, as he had a taste for languages, he might learn the Spanish, and that this tongue might be ennobled by his acquiring it. In 1546, there was published at Paris, in folio, a French version, of which Jean Maugin, called Le petit Angevin, is announced as the author. This production professes to be revised and amended from a former French translation, which is by an uncertain hand, and which, as is acknowledged in the preface, has only drawn the *matiere principale* from the Spanish. Accordingly, Maugin, who wrought on it, has enlarged in some places on the original, and abridged in others; the mode of warfare too has been altered, and the love intrigues have been Frenchified and modernized. This edition is adorned with cuts, which might suit any Spanish romance of chivalry, and are in fact adopted in the French edition of Amadis of Greece; they represent a lady in child-bed—a young man receiving the order of knight-hood—an equestrian combat—a city scaled—ships in a storm—an interview between a lady and knight. The romance of Palmerin de Oliva was also translated into English by Anthony Munday, and published in the year 1588, 4to, in black letter.

Like many other heroes of Spanish romances, the knight who gives name to this work was of illegitimate birth. Reymicio, the eighth emperor of Constantinople from Constantine, had a daughter named Grianá, whom he destined as the wife of Tarisius, son to the king of Hungary, and nephew to the empress. The princess Grianá, however, preferred Florendos of Macedon, with whom she had an interview one night in an orchard, of which the consequence was the production of the hero of this romance. Grianá, by pretending sickness, concealed her pregnancy; and on the birth of the child she entrusted him to one of her confidants to be exposed. The infant was discovered by a peasant in the neighbourhood, who carried him to his cottage, brought him up as his son, and bestowed on him the name of Palmerin d'Oliva, from his being found on a hill which was covered with olives and palms. Palmerin was for a time contented with his humble destiny, but when he grew up and discovered that he was



not the son of his reputed father, he longed to signalize himself by feats of arms.

One day, while in a forest, Palmerin had an opportunity of delivering from the jaws of a lioness a merchant who was returning to his own country from Constantinople. Our hero was taken to the city of Hermide by the person he had preserved, and there furnished with arms and a horse. Thus equipped, he proceeded to the court of Macedon to receive the order of knighthood from Florendos, who was son to the king of that country, and (though this was unknown to both parties) the father of Palmerin.

After obtaining the honour he required, the first exploit of our young hero was destroying a serpent that guarded a fountain, of which the waters were essential to the recovery of the health of Primaleon, king of Macedon. While engaged in this adventure, he received the privilege of being proof against enchantment from certain fairies who resorted to this fountain, and had a pique at the serpent.

The fame of this exploit of Palmerin being spread abroad, many neighbouring princes applied to him for assistance. In all the enterprises undertaken at their request, Palmerin was eminently successful. At length, extending his succour to more distant quarters, he delivered the emperor of Germany from the knights by whom he was besieged in the town of Gand (Ghent). Here Palmerin fell in love with the emperor's daughter, Polinarda, the heroine of the romance, and who, before this time, like the mistress of Artus de la Bretagne, had appeared to her lover in a dream. Having distinguished himself at a tournament in Germany, Palmerin proceeded to one which had been proclaimed in France by the prince of that country, for the purpose of driving into his opponents a due sense of the peerless beauty of his mistress, the duchess of Burgundy; but Palmerin, of course, established the superior excellence of the charms of Polinarda. After his return to Germany, this princess still continued in the retirement in which she lived at the time of his departure, but at length, by the intervention of his dwarf Urgando, he was admitted to her embraces.

Now about this time messengers arrived at

court from the king of Norway, to implore assistance for their master in a war in which he was unfortunately engaged with the king of England. The emperor agreed to send an army to his relief; but Trineus, the emperor's son, being enamoured of Agriola, daughter of the English monarch, privately departed with Palmerin, and arrived in Britain with the view of aiding the father of his mistress. England now becomes the chief theatre of adventures, which at length terminate with the departure of Palmerin and Trineus, who eloped with Agriola, the king's daughter. They all set sail in the same vessel, and during their voyage experienced a storm of some day's continuance. When it ceased, they found they were somewhat out of their reckoning, for, instead of having reached the north of Germany, as intended, they had made the coast of the Morea. During the calm, by which the tempest was followed, Palmerin landed at the adjacent island of Calpa, for the purpose of hawking, a diversion which, next to the pleasures of the chase, seems to have been the chief amusement of persons of rank, and which continued to be so till the improvement in fire-arms. In the absence of Palmerin, the ship in which he had left his friends was taken by two Turkish galleys. The princess Agriola was presented by her captors to the Grand Turk; but Trineus having been set ashore on an island, which is the counterpart of that of Circe, was converted into a lap-dog.

Palmerin, meanwhile, was discovered in the island of Calpa by Archidiana, daughter of the sultan of Babylon. This lady carried him with her, and took him into her service, as did also her cousin Ardemira, who then resided at the Babylonish court. Palmerin, however, maintained his fidelity to Polinarda, and resisted the importunate solicitation of these princesses. The disappointment had so powerful an effect on Ardemira, that she burst a blood-vessel and expired. Amaran, son of the king of Phrygia, to whom she had been affianced, came, on hearing of her demise, to the court of Babylon, charged the princess Archidiana with her death, and offered to maintain his accusation by an appeal to arms. Palmerin espoused her quarrel, killed Amaran in single combat, and, in consequence, became



a great favourite of the soldan, whom he assisted in carrying on a prosperous war against the lineage of Amaran. The soldan, elated with this success, fitted out an expedition against Constantinople, which Palmerin was ordered to accompany. That knight, however, seized the opportunity of a tempest, which arose during the voyage, to separate from the Asiatic fleet, and forced the seamen of his own vessel to steer for a port in Germany. Having landed, he immediately proceeded to the capital of the emperor, where he passed some time with Polinarda. After remaining fifteen days, he set out in quest of Trineus; and having arrived at Buda, he learned that Florendos, prince of Macedon, had lately slain Tarisius, who, it will be recollected, was his rival in the affections of Griana, princess of Constantinople, and had been united to her in marriage by compulsion of her father. Florendos, having been taken captive by the family of Tarisius, had been sent to Constantinople, where he was condemned to the flames along with Griana, who was suspected as his accomplice. Palmerin instantly repaired to Constantinople; maintained their innocence; defeated their accusers, the nephews of Tarisius; and thus, though unknown to himself, preserved the lives of his parents. While confined to bed, in consequence of the wounds he had received in their vindication, he was visited by Griana, who discovered, from a mark on his face, and from his mentioning the place where he had been exposed, that he was indeed her child. He was then joyfully received by the emperor, and acknowledged as his successor; his own son and grandson having been slain in the battle with the Assyrians, who, after their separation from Palmerin, had landed in Greece, but had been totally defeated.

After these events Palmerin continued his quest of Trineus, but in sailing over the Mediterranean he was taken captive by the Turkish galleys, and conducted to the palace of the Grand Turk. There he was instrumental in liberating the princess Agriola from the power of that monarch. He afterwards arrived at the court of a princess, with whom Trineus at that time resided in quality of her dog, having been lately presented to her by the enchantress, by whom he was

originally transformed. Palmerin agreed to accompany this princess on a visit which she paid to Mussabelin, a Persian magician, in expectation of being cured of a distemper in her nose. The necromancer informed her, at the first consultation, that this cure could only be effected by the flowers of a tree which grew in the castle of the Ten Steps, an edifice which was guarded by enchantment. This adventure was undertaken and achieved by Palmerin, who gained the flowers of the tree, and an enchanted bird, which was destined, in due season, to announce to him, by an unearthly shriek, the approaching termination of his existence. He also put an end to the spells of the castle, by which means Trineus, who, in his canine capacity, had accompanied his friend and owner, was restored to his original form.

This exploit is followed by a long series of adventures, bearing, however, a strong resemblance to those already related; new combats, new enchantments, and new soldans with inflammable daughters. Palmerin and Trineus at length returned to Europe, and the latter was soon after married to Agriola. At the same time Palmerin espoused Polinarda, and on the death of his grandsire Reymicio ascended the throne of Constantinople.

It has been suspected, from what has been said in some Latin verses at the end of *Palmerin d'Oliva*, that this romance was written by a woman: and if so, it gives us no very favourable impression of her morals. Nor does she atone for this defect by genius or felicity of invention. M. de Paulmy, indeed, prefers *Palmerin d'Oliva* to all the romances of the family history of the Palmerins, and thinks it as superior to them as *Amadis de Gaul* to its continuations. But more weight is to be given to the opinion of the author of *Don Quixote*; and even from the abstract that has been presented, the reader will, I think, be satisfied of the justness of the sentence by which Cervantes condemned it to the flames.—“Then opening another volume he found it to be *Palmerin d'Oliva*. Ha! have I found you, cried the curate; here, take this *Oliva*, let it be hewn in pieces and burnt, and the ashes scattered in the air.”

The next romance in the series of the *Palmerin* histories is that of



PRIMALEON,<sup>1</sup>

son of Palmerin d'Oliva and Polinarda, which was written originally in Castilian, and bears to be translated from the Greek by Francisco Delicado. It was first printed in 1516; afterwards at Seville in 1524; at Venice in 1534; Bilboa, 1585; and Lisbon, 1598. An Italian translation was published at Venice in 1559, and a French one at Lyons in 1572. Anthony Munday translated into English, first, that part of the romance which relates to the exploits of Polendos, which was dedicated, in some Latin verses, to Sir Francis Drake, and published in 1589: He afterwards continued his labours, and produced the complete version of the romance, printed in 1595 and 1619.

Near the commencement of this work there are related the adventures of Polendos, which form the most interesting part of the romance of Primaleon. The first exploit of this hero was not brilliant. While he yet resided in the court of his mother, the queen of Tharsus, returning one day from the chase, he perceived a little old woman sitting on the steps of the palace, and, on account of some imaginary offence, kicked her to the foot of the staircase. The old lady, when she had reached the bottom, muttered that it was not so his father Palmerin d'Oliva succoured the unfortunate. Polendos thus learned the secret of his birth, for, in fact, he was the son of Palmerin, whose fidelity to Polinarda had been, on one occasion, overcome by an intoxicating beverage he had received from the Queen of Tharsus. The prince now burned to signalise himself by more splendid actions than the one he had just committed. Accordingly, he departed for Constantinople to make himself known to his father, and performed the usual exploits on the way. He did not, however, remain long at that city, but set out to rescue the Princess Francelina, of whom he had become enamoured, from the hands of a giant and dwarf, by whose power she was confined in an enchanted castle.

Polendos returned to Constantinople during

<sup>1</sup> Libro que trata de los valerosos Hechos en armas de Primaleon hijo del Emperador Palmerin, y de su hermano Polendos, y de Don Duados Principe de Inglaterra, y de ostros preciados Cavalleros de la Corte del Emperador Palmerin.

a great tournament, which was held to celebrate the nuptials of one of the emperor's daughters. On this occasion, Primaleon, being stimulated to the desire of glory by the exploits of his half brother Polendos, was admitted into the order of chivalry, and greatly distinguished himself. The remainder of the romance is occupied with his adventures, and those of Duados (Edward) of England. A Duchess of Ormedes, incensed at Palmerin d'Oliva, because he had slain her son, had declared she would only grant her daughter, the beautiful Gridoina, in marriage to the knight who should bring her the head of Primaleon. This raised up many enemies to that young hero, and, as he invariably slew the lovers of Gridoina, he became the object of her deepest detestation. The lady lived shut up in a remote castle, where Primaleon accidentally arrived one evening, and being unknown, he completely possessed himself of her affections before his departure.

The author of Primaleon designed

PLATIR,<sup>2</sup>

the son of Primaleon and Gridoina, to succeed his father in chivalry, and a romance, of which he is the hero, was accordingly written to continue the series, which was printed at Valladolid in 1533. This work is one of those tales of chivalry condemned to the flames by Cervantes. "Here is the noble Don Platir, cried the barber. It is an old book, replied the curate, and I can think of nothing in him that deserves a grain of pity: away with him without more words; and down he went accordingly."

This indifferent romance was superseded, as the legitimate continuation of the family history of the Palmerins, by the superior merit of the romance of

PALMERIN OF ENGLAND,<sup>3</sup>

son to Don Duados, prince of England, and Florida, daughter of the Emperor Palmerin d'Oliva.

<sup>2</sup> Chronica del muy valente y esforzado Cavallero Platir hijo del Emperador Primaleon.

<sup>3</sup> Libro del famosissimo y muy valeroso Cavallero Palmerin de Inglaterra hijo del Rey Don Duarte.



The most ancient edition of *Palmerin of England* is in the French language ; it was printed at Lyons, 1553, is dedicated to Diana of Poitiers, duchess of Valentinois, and is said in the title-page to be translated by Jacques Vincent from the Castilian. In 1555, an edition in the Italian language was published at Venice, which also purports that it was translated from the Spanish. This romance next appeared in Portuguese in 1567, dedicated to the Infanta Dona Maria, by Francesco de Moraes. Of Moraes little farther is known than that he was born at Bragança ; that he was treasurer to King Joam III., and perished by a violent death at Evora in 1572. He informs the reader, in the dedication, that being in France, he had discovered a French MS. chronicle of *Palmerin* which he had translated into Portuguese.

In spite of this declaration of Moraes, and of the circumstance that the French and Italian editions appeared twelve or fourteen years previous to the Portuguese, both professing to be translated from Spanish, Mr Southey has maintained that *Palmerin of England* was neither written in Spanish, as alleged in the French and Italian editions, nor translated from ancient chronicles, as pretended by Moraes ; but that the Portuguese is the language in which it was originally composed, and that Moraes himself is the author.

With regard to the assertion of Moraes, it is argued justly that original romances were very frequently represented by the authors as translated from old manuscripts ; that the account which he gives of discovering the chronicles implies that the story is his own, was meant to be so understood, and was understood so ; and that if the work had not been original, the pretence concerning the manuscripts could not have escaped detection, as the French and Italian versions could not have been unknown in Lisbon at the period of its publication.

The difficulty arising from the priority of the French and Italian translations, Mr Southey resolves by adducing similar instances in which translations have been made from written copies, and published before the original, and by conjecturing that Moraes wrote the book in France, but delayed print-

ing it till his return to Portugal, and that meanwhile it was translated into French and Italian. As to the assertion in the title-pages of the French editions, that it was taken from the Castilian, he believes that term to be used as synonymous with Spanish, which was, at that time, employed to denote generally the language of all the writers of the peninsula. He remarks, besides, that the Spaniards lay no claim to the romance, and that he knows no proof that it exists in their language.

Thus the way is cleared for the evidence of its Portuguese original, which consists in an assertion of Cervantes, that there was a report that it was composed by a wise king of Portugal, which, though a mistake as to the author, evinces the general belief that it was written in Portuguese. There is also, according to Mr Southey, internal evidence that *Palmerin of England* was the work of an inhabitant of Portugal, since to much of the scenery the author has given not only natural but local truth.

In *Palmerin*, as in many other romances of chivalry, the author gives an account not only of the infancy of the hero, but the adventures of his parents. Don Duados, son of Fadrique, king of England, was united, as mentioned in the romance of *Primaleon*, to Flerida, daughter of *Palmerin d'Oliveira*. One day, while pursuing a wild boar in a forest of England, this prince loses his way and arrives at a castle, into which he is admitted, and is afterwards treacherously detained by a giantess called Eutropa, with the view of revenging the death of her brother, who had been slain by *Palmerin d'Oliveira*. This giantess had a nephew called *Dramuziando*, who resided in the castle, and was the son of the person who had been killed by *Palmerin*. *Dramuziando* presents the character (a very singular one in romance) of an amiable and accomplished giant. He was, we are told, pleasant in discourse, and (which was probably no difficult matter) surpassed all his kindred in courtesy ; he conceived a friendship for Duados, and, contrary to the intentions of the aunt, treated him with much kindness while he was detained a prisoner in the castle.

Flerida having set out in search of her husband Duados, with a large escort, is seized in a forest with the pains of labour, and gives birth



to two sons, who are baptized by a chaplain who was in attendance. This ceremony was scarcely concluded when a savage man, who inhabited the forest, approached, leading two lions, and possessed himself of the infants, one of whom had just been named Palmerin, the future hero of the romance, and the other Florian. Both these unfortunate children he straightway conveys to his den, and destines them as food for his lions.

After this mishap, Florida returns disconsolate to the palace, and a messenger is despatched to Constantinople to inform the emperor and his court of the recent loss, and also of the captivity of Duardos. On receiving this intelligence, Primaleon and a number of knights depart for England. A great proportion of the early part of the romance is occupied with the adventures of those engaged in attempting the deliverance of Duardos. Most of the knights fall under the power of the giant Dramuziando, but the only revenge he takes is employing them, as he of late had employed Duardos, to combat each new enemy that approached.

Meanwhile the wife of the savage man had prevailed on her husband to relinquish his intentions of dismembering Palmerin and Florian for behoof of his lions, and the two young princes are brought up as his own children, along with his son Selvian. One day, when Florian had roamed to a considerable distance in pursuit of a stag, he meets Sir Pridos, son to the Duke of Wales, who takes him to the English court, where he is introduced to the king and Florida, and trained up by them with much care, under the name of the Child of the Desert.

Some time after this, Palmerin having strayed to the sea-coast, accompanied by Selvian, the savage man's son, sees a galley strike on the shore. From this vessel Polendos, mentioned in the romance of Primaleon, disembarks, having come to England with other Greek knights, in quest of Duardos. At their own request he takes Palmerin and Selvian on board his ship, and sails with them to Constantinople. Here they are introduced to the emperor, who remains ignorant of the extraction of Palmerin, but is certified of his high rank by special letters from the Lady of the Lake. Our hero was in consequence knighted,

and had his sword girt on by Polinarda, the daughter of Primaleon. During his residence at court a tournament is held, in which he and an unknown knight, who bore for his device a savage leading two lions, chiefly distinguish themselves. The stranger departs without discovering himself, but he is afterwards found out to be Florian of the Desert, and is thenceforth denominated the Knight of the Savage.

Palmerin having become enamoured of Polinarda, the daughter of Primaleon, and having expressed his sentiments rather freely to the princess, she forbids him her presence. In the depth of despair he forsakes the Grecian court, and journeying towards England, under the name of the Knight of Fortune, succours on his way many injured ladies, and bears away the prize from many knights. He is always accompanied in these exploits by Selvian, who acted as his squire. Having arrived in England, while passing through a wood, they are met and recognized by the savage man. In the neighbourhood of London, Palmerin is received in a castle, of which the lady asks him to combat the Knight of the Savage, who had slain her son. On his arrival in London, the first business of Palmerin is to defy Florian of the Savage. It is customary in most Spanish romances to stake against each other the two brothers, who are the chief characters in the work. On the present occasion, however, the combat is interrupted at the entreaty of the princess Florida. Nor is it ever resumed, for Palmerin having overcome Dramuziando, and set Duardos at liberty, the birth of the champions is revealed by Daliarte the magician, whose declaration is confirmed by the deposition of the savage man.

Florian and Palmerin now leave the court of England in company, but it is impossible to follow them through the long series of adventures in which they engage. A great proportion of the exploits in the romance are performed by the brothers, separately or united. Some of the adventures of Palmerin, particularly those in the Perilous Isle, possess considerable beauty and interest. A number of exploits are, however, attributed to subordinate characters, and a proper share is assigned to the giant Dramuziando, who, though he



had been vanquished by Palmerin, is allowed to retain his castle, on account of his courtesy and good treatment of Duardos. Eutropa, nevertheless, still retains her ill will to the family of the Palmerins; and many of the incidents in the romance arise from her machinations, and those of other aggrieved giants, to avenge themselves on the brothers; but all their efforts are ultimately counteracted by the magician Daliarte.

The chief scene of adventure is the castle of Almourol. There, under care of a giant, dwelt the beautiful but haughty Miraguarda, whose portraiture was delineated on a shield, which hung over the gate of the castle. This picture was, in rotation, protected by knights, who had become enamoured of the original, against all other knights who had the audacity to maintain that the charms of their ladies were comparable to those of Miraguarda. At length, during a period when the picture was guarded by the giant Dramuziando, one of the adorers of the original, it is stolen by Albayzar, soldan of Babylon, who had been positively commanded to gain this trophy by his mistress the Lady Targiana, daughter of the Grand Turk.

Finally, all the knights being assembled at Constantinople, espouse their respective ladies. Palmerin is united to Polinarda, and his brother Florian to Leonarda, queen of Thrace, whose disenchantment had been one of the principal adventures of Palmerin.

The romance, however, does not conclude with these marriages. Florian, whose character resembles that of the younger brothers in the history of Amadis, while residing at the court of the Grand Turk, had run off with his daughter. That princess was now married to Albayzar, soldan of Babylon, who had stolen for her sake the portrait of Miraguarda; but as she still retained a strong resentment at the conduct of her former lover, she employed a magician to avenge her on the Queen of Thrace, who had been lately united to Florian. This queen, while disporting in a garden, is unexpectedly carried off by two enormous griffins, and conveyed to a magic castle, where she is confined in the image of a huge serpent. Florian's attention is now occupied by the discovery and disenchantment of his queen, in which he at length

succeeds, by the assistance of the magician Daliarte. The scheme of revenge having thus failed, Albayzar, on account of the affront which had been offered to his queen by Florian, and exasperated at the refusal of the emperor to deliver that prince into his power, invades the Greek territories with two hundred thousand men, and accompanied by all the kings and soldans of the east. Three desperate engagements are fought between the Christians and Turks, in which Albayzar is slain, and the pagan army totally annihilated; not, however, without great loss on the other side, for though Palmerin, Primaleon, Dramuziando, and Florian survive, a large proportion of the Christian knights perish in these fatal encounters.

The fame and reputation of this romance, which divides the palm of popularity with Amadis de Gaul, has probably been, in some measure, owing to the commendations of Cervantes. For, if we may judge from the number of editions, Palmerin was less read in the age during which tales of chivalry were in fashion than many of its contemporaries; and hence its celebrity was probably the consequence of the extravagant eulogy of Cervantes. "And this Palm of England, let it be kept and preserved as a thing unique; and let another casket be made for it, such as that which Alexander found among the spoils of Darius, and set apart, that the works of the poet Homer might be kept in it. This book, Sir Comrade, is of authority, for two reasons; the one, because it is a right good one in itself, and the other, because the report is that a wise king of Portugal composed it. All the adventures at the castle of Miraguarda are excellent, and managed with great skill; the discourses are courtly and clear, observing, with much propriety and judgment, the decorum of the speaker.—I say then, saving your good pleasure, Master Nicholas, this and Amadis de Gaul should be saved from the fire, and all the rest be without farther search, destroyed."—Cervantes, who had so keen a perception of the absurdities of the productions of knight errantry, would not so strongly have praised this romance unless it had deserved some commendation; but though Palmerin be certainly the most entertaining of the romances of the peninsula, I cannot help



thinking the author of *Don Quixote* has somewhat overrated its merit. The arrangement of the incidents is as wild and perplexed as in other tales of chivalry. Besides, the individual adventures of Palmerin are invariably prosperous, and we never feel any fear or interest on his account, as we are assured of a happy issue by the frequent recurrence of success. The sentiments, too, are trivial, and the characters of the heroines insipid, even beyond what is common in romances of chivalry. Indeed, the author seems to have entertained a very unfavourable opinion of the fair sex, and indulges in many ill-bred reflections on their envy, unreasonableness, and inconstancy; but he has not decked out his females even with these attributes. The portraits of the knights, however, are better brought out and discriminated. As in many other Spanish romances, Palmerin represents a faithful lover, and Florian a man of gallantry, though more than usually licentious. But the most interesting characters are Daliarte, a learned and solitary magician, who resides in the Valley of Perdition, immersed in profound study; and the giant Dramuziando, for whose safety we feel principally anxious during the last terrible conflicts. The Emperor Palmerin d'Oliva, too, is here represented as a fine old man, with a high sense of honour, and great courtliness of speech. The damsels, the strange knights, and the castles which abound in this romance, are generally introduced and described in such a manner as to excite considerable curiosity concerning them; and I know no work of the kind where interest and suspense, with regard to the conclusion, are kept up with greater success. If in the rival work of *Amadis de Gaul* there be more fire and animation, in Palmerin there is infinitely more variety, delicacy, and sweetness.

Mr Southey, however, has drawn a parallel between this romance and *Amadis de Gaul*, which, on the whole, is much to the advantage of the latter. "In the description of battles," he says, "the author of *Amadis* exceeds all poets and all romancers, as he fairly fixes attention on the champions. But Moraes sets every thing else before the eyes; he is principally occupied with the lists and spectators, and enters into the feelings both of those who are engaged and of those who look

on. The magic of Moraes," he continues, "is not good;" the cup of tears is a puerile fiction compared with the garland which blossoms out on the head of Oriana. The hero of Moraes is courageous, virtuous, and generous, to the height of chivalry; but it is abstract courage, virtue, and generosity, with nothing to stamp and individualize the possessor. The Florian of Moraes, however, is admirably supported, and he is a more prominent character than Galaor. But libertinism is only a subordinate feature of Galaor; that which stands foremost is his high sense of chivalrous honour. Florian has his wit, his good humour, and his courage, to palliate his faults; but these are not sufficient, and he is never respected by the reader as Galaor is. What is excused in one as a weakness, is condemned in the other as a vice. This is unfortunately managed; for, as he is the cause of the final war, his character should have been clearer. Had Targiana been sister instead of wife to Albayzar, it would have been felt the Turks were in the right; and as it is, they are not so manifestly in the wrong, as the author should have made them."

The romance of Palmerin was translated from French into English by Anthony Munday, the Grub Street patriarch, as he has been called, towards the close of the 16th century. This work, however, according to Mr Southey, was extremely ill executed, as it was, in a great measure, performed by journey-men who understood neither French nor English. It has lately been translated from the original, with much elegance, by the author so often quoted in the above inquiries concerning the romances of the peninsula.

The work with which we have been last occupied may be regarded as closing the family history of the Palmerins. It was, I believe, subsequently carried on in Portuguese, but this continuation obtained no celebrity nor success. There is, however, a very pretty French romance of the 16th century, by Gabriel Chapuis, who translated so many of the Spanish tales of chivalry, entitled *Darinel*, son of Primaleon. The most interesting adventures relate to the Palace of Illusions, raised by a magician, in which every one who entered fancied he enjoyed all things that he wished. This work is announced as



translated from the Spanish, but was in fact the composition of Chapuis.

Besides the romances concerning the imaginary families of Amadis and Palmerin, there are mentioned in the scrutiny of Don Quixote's library, Don Olivante de Laura, by Antonio de Torquemada, which is condemned for its arrogance and absurdity, and Felixmarte of Hyrcania, which is sent to the bon-fire in the court, for the harshness and dryness of the style, spite of the strange birth and chimerical adventures of its hero. Dr Johnson, I suppose, is the only person in this land who has been guilty of reading the whole of Felixmarte of Hyrcania. Bishop Percy informed Boswell, "That the doctor, when a boy, was immoderately fond of romances of chivalry, and he retained his fondness for them through life; so that, spending part of a summer at my parsonage-house in the country, he chose for his regular reading the old Spanish romance of Felixmarte of Hyrcania, in folio, which he read quite through."—*Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. i. p. 25, 8vo.

The more celebrated romance of Don Belianis of Greece,<sup>1</sup> is frequently alluded to in Avellaneda's continuation of Don Quixote, and is also mentioned by Cervantes more favourably than most others of the same description, in the scrutiny of the library. "This which I have in my hands, said the barber, is the famous Belianis. Truly, cried the curate, he with his second, third, and fourth parts, had need of a dose to purge his excessive choler: Besides, his Castle of Fame should be demolished, and a heap of other rubbish removed, in order to which I give my vote to grant them the benefit of a reprieve, and as they show signs of amendment, so shall mercy or justice be used towards them: In the mean time take them into custody, and keep them safe at home; but let none be permitted to converse with them."

It would be needless to detain and tire the reader with any account of the history of the *Invencible* Cavallero Don Polindo, son of the King of Numidia, and his love with the Prin-

cess Belisia; of the *Valeroso Cavallero* Don Cirongilio of Thrace, son of the King of Macedonia, written by Bernardo de Vargas, or of the *Esforzado Cavallero* Don Clarian de Landanis, by Geronimo Lopez.

There still remain, however, two romances of considerable beauty and interest, which first appeared in the dialect of Catalonia.

When the Romans were expelled from Spain by the northern invaders, the language they bequeathed was adopted, but soon disfigured by the conquerors. During the 9th century it was still farther corrupted by the inroads of the Moors, and had at length so far degenerated, that the Arabic became the chief vehicle of literary composition.

In the 11th century the French *Romans* language was introduced into the peninsula by Prince Henry of Lorraine, who married a daughter of Alphonso VI. of Castile, and was diffused by the intercourse which subsisted between the French and Spanish nations, in their mutual resistance of the Saracens. A great change in consequence took place in the language of Spain, and five or six different dialects were spoken in the peninsula. Of these, the earliest, the most widely extended, and the one which bore the strongest resemblance to the southern French *Romans*, was that adopted in Catalonia. It was spoken in that province, in Roussillon and Valencia; and, till the period of the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella (when the Castilian tongue became prevalent), it was the language which afforded the best specimens, both of prose and poetical composition. Petrarch is said to have been largely indebted to the amatory verses of the Troubadours of this region, and two of the earliest and most interesting romances that have been produced in Spain, appeared in the dialect of Catalonia, previous to their translation into the Castilian.

Of these the earliest, and perhaps the most curious, is

#### TIRANTE THE WHITE,<sup>2</sup>

the first part of which was written in the

<sup>1</sup> Libro primero del valoroso e invencible principe Don Belianis de Grecia, hijo del Emperador Don Belanio de Grecia, sacada de lengua Griega en la qual le escrivio el sabio Fristan por un hijo del virtuoso varon Toribio Fernandez.—*Printed 1564 and 1579.*

<sup>2</sup> Los cinco libros del efforçado y invencible Cavallero Tirante el Blanco di Roca Salada Cavallero de la Garrotera, el qual por su alta Cavalleria alcanco a ser principe y Cesar del imperio de Grecia.



Catalonian dialect by Johan Martorell, a knight of Valencia, but being left unfinished by him, it was completed by Juan de Galba. The first of these authors informs us he translated it from the English, by which Mr Warton conjectures he meant the Breton language, in which it may have been originally written. It is difficult to say whether this assertion of the author be true, or whether he has framed the story, to give some appearance of authenticity to his romance, which relates the exploits of a Breton knight. That part of it which contains the history of the Earl of Warwick, is, I think, most probably translated, as it closely corresponds with the old English romance, *Guy of Warwick*, which was versified from the original French in the beginning of the 14th century ;—a period long preceding the composition of *Tirante the White* in Spain.

At what time this romance was written or translated by Martorell, is not precisely ascertained. It was first printed, however, at Valencia, in 1490 ; and there is mentioned in it a work on chivalry, entitled *L'Arbre des Batailles*, which was written in 1390 ; so that it must have been composed between these two periods. But the date may, I think, be still farther limited. The Canary islands were discovered in 1326, and began to be well known in Europe about 1405. Now, from the false notions expressed concerning them in *Tirante*, and the extravagant idea which seems to be entertained of their power and magnitude, it is probable this romance was written before their precise situation and extent were ascertained in the peninsula. On the whole, therefore, the era of its composition may be pretty safely fixed about the year 1400.

*Tirante*, as has been mentioned, was first published in the Catalonian dialect at Valencia, in 1490. It was thence transferred into the Castilian language, and published at Valladolid in 1511, one volume folio. There has been no subsequent Spanish edition, but the Italian translation by Lelio Manfredi has passed through three impressions, of which the first appeared in 1538. The Count de Caylus more lately brought it forward in a French garb, after the fashion of the Count de Tressan ; he has altered the incidents of the story in some places ; in others he has

considerably abridged the work, by omitting precepts of chivalry, and has almost everywhere rendered it more licentious.

The hero of this romance, while on his journey to attend the tournaments, which were about to be celebrated in England (on account of the marriage of the king of that country with a princess of France), is accidentally separated from his companions, and having fallen asleep on his horse, arrives in rather an unwarlike attitude at the hermitage of William, Earl of Warwick.

This nobleman, disgusted with the European world, had gone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Thence he spread a report of his death, which seems to have been eagerly received in England, returned to his own country in disguise, and established himself in a retirement near the castle in which his countess resided. After he had passed some time in solitude, fortune gave him an opportunity of rendering signal service to his country. The great king of the Canary islands had landed in Britain with a formidable army, and had subdued nearly the whole of England, while the monarch of the conquered country, driven successively from London and Canterbury, had sought refuge in the town of Warwick, which was soon invested by the Canary forces. At this crisis, the earl, who lived in the neighbourhood, came to the assistance of his prince ; killed the intrusive monarch in single combat, and defeated his successor in a pitched battle. After these important services the earl discovered himself to his countess, and again retired to his hermitage. In the English metrical romance of *Guy of Warwick*, translated from the French, that earl, after a long absence, returns to England, in disguise of a palmer, visits his countess unknown to her, and delivers king Athelstane from an invasion of the Danes, who had besieged him in Winchester, by overthrowing their champion in single combat.

William of Warwick was engaged in the perusal of *L'Arbre des Batailles*, when the unknown and drowsy knight arrived at his habitation. When roused from the sleep in which he was plunged, he informed the earl that his name was *Tirante el Blanco*, that he was so called, because his father was lord of the marches of Tirranie, situated in that part



of France which was opposite to the coast of England, and that his mother was daughter to the Duke of Britany. After this genealogical sketch, he mentioned his design of attending the tournaments, and receiving the honour of knighthood. His host accordingly read to him a chapter from *L'Arbre des Batailles*, which was a work on the institutions of chivalry. This prelection he accompanied with a learned commentary, explaining the different sorts of arms which were used in combats, and dwelling on the exploits of ancient knights: "But, as it is late," continues he, "your company must be at a distance; you are ignorant of the roads, and you will be in danger of losing yourself in the woods, with which this district is covered. I therefore recommend an immediate departure." The above arguments might certainly have supported a more hospitable conclusion, but Tiran is dismissed with a present of the *Tree of Battles*, as a manual of chivalry, and a request to revisit the hermitage on his return from the tournaments.

Tiran accordingly, when the festival, which lasted a twelvemonth, was concluded, repaired to the hermitage, and, encouraged by the proofs he had formerly received of the hospitable disposition of the earl, brought his companions, to the number of thirty-eight, along with him. The earl, after he had recovered from his consternation, demanded an account of the tournaments, and inquired who had most distinguished himself. He is answered by Diofebo, one of his guests, that it was Tiran himself; that a French lord, called Villermes, having objected to his wearing a knot which had adorned the bosom of the beautiful Agnes, daughter to the Duke of Berri, had defied him to mortal combat, and had required that they should fight armed with a paper buckler and a helmet of flowers. The combatants having accordingly met in this fantastic array, Villermes was killed in the encounter. Tiran having recovered from eleven wounds he had received, six of which, according to surgical etiquette, ought to have been mortal, killed in one day four knights, who were brothers in arms, and who proved to be the Dukes of Burgundy and Bavaria, and the Kings of Poland and Friezeland. This last monarch found an avenger in one of

his subjects, Kyrie Eleison, or, *Lord have mercy upon us*, who was suspected of a descent from the ancient giants. On arriving in England, this champion visited the tomb of his master, and expired of grief on beholding his monument, and the arms of Tiran suspended over the banners of his sovereign. His place was supplied by his brother Thomas of Montauban, whose stature afforded still more unequivocal symptoms of gigantic ancestry. In spite of his pedigree, or perhaps in consequence of it, as giants were always unlucky in the romantic ages, he was overthrown by Tiran, and consented to beg his life.

Here ends the relation of the exploits of Tiran, during the marriage festivals of England. From the hermitage of the Earl of Warwick he returns to Britany, where a messenger soon after arrives with intelligence that Rhodes and its knights are closely besieged by the Genoese and the Sultan of Cairo. Tiran sets out for the relief of this island, and takes Philip, the youngest son of the King of France, along with him. In the course of their voyage they anchor in the roads of Palmero. The King of Sicily throws over a platform from the port to the vessel of Tiran, and covers it with tapestry, hanging down to the sea. Tiran and his companions, having been treated on shore with corresponding magnificence, proceed on their destination. The siege of Rhodes is raised immediately on their landing, and after this success they return to Sicily, where Philip is united to the princess of that country.

Soon after the marriage of Philip and the princess, a messenger from the Emperor of Constantinople announces the invasion of his master's territories, by a Moorish soldan and the Grand Turk. Our hero proceeds to the succour of the Greek empire, and immediately on his arrival is entrusted by its sovereign with the chief command of the forces. After Tiran receives this appointment, a great part of the romance is occupied with long details of the war carried on against the Turks, who are defeated in several pitched battles. In one of these the Kings of Cappadocia and Egypt, and a hundred thousand men, are killed on the part of the enemy: the Sultan, the King of Africa, the Grand Turk, and Grand Turk's son, are severely wounded;



with a loss of only twelve hundred and thirty-four men on the side of the Greeks. Being unable to withstand such inequality of slaughter, the Turks are forced to solicit a truce. This being granted, the interval of repose is occupied with splendid festivals and tournaments, held at Constantinople. During this period, Urganda, sister of the renowned Arthur, arrives at Constantinople in quest of her brother. The emperor exhibits to her an old gentleman he kept in a cage, whom she speedily recognises as the object of her search. As long as he retains his sword, the famed Escalibor, in his hand, he returns most pertinent answers to the questions addressed to him; but when deprived of this support, his observations become extremely infantile. Urganda is permitted to take him along with her. On the same evening she gives a splendid supper, in the vessel in which she had arrived, to the emperor and his court, and sets sail with her brother next morning. But it is not said how Arthur found his way to Constantinople, nor where he went after his departure. In this stage too, of the romance, the intrigues of the Greek ladies with the French knights who had accompanied Tiran to Constantinople, are related, and the particulars of some of them detailed with unnecessary minuteness. Hyppolito seduces, or rather is seduced by, the empress; and Diofebo, afterwards created Duke of Macedonia, carries on an amour with Stephania, one of the attendants of Carmesina, daughter of the emperor. Tiran becomes enamoured of this princess, who, during day, was always surrounded by a hundred and seventy damsels; but at other seasons he has frequent interviews with her, by favour of one of her attendants, called Plazirdemavida. The good understanding, however, which subsisted between Tiran and the princess, is at length interrupted by the plots of the Vedova Reposada, another attendant, who, having fallen in love with Tiran, contrives to make him jealous of her mistress, by a stratagem resembling that which deceives Claudio in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and also the lover of Geneura in the fifth canto of the *Orlando Furioso*.

The truce between the Turks and Christians being expired, Tiran sets out for the army without taking leave of the princess.

While the vessel in which he was to be conveyed is still at anchor in the roads, she dispatches Plazirdemavida to inquire into the reasons of his conduct; but a storm having meanwhile arisen, and the ship having been driven from its moorings, her emissary is unable to return to Constantinople, and the vessel is carried towards the coast of Africa. Two mariners convey Plazirdemavida on shore. Tiran remains with a single sailor in the vessel, until it is at length wrecked on the coast of Tunis. While wandering on the shore, our hero meets accidentally with the ambassador of the king of Tremecen, is conducted by him to court, and proves of great service to that monarch in the wars in which he was engaged. On one occasion Tiran besieges the town of Montagata, when, to his great surprise, Plazirdemavida, whom he believed lost, comes to his camp to intercede for the inhabitants, and is now appointed queen of an extensive territory. Tiran, by means of similar alliances and conquests, is enabled to embark a hundred and fifty thousand infantry, and eighty-eight thousand cavalry, for the succour of the Greek emperor. Soon after his return to Constantinople with this formidable armament, he burns the Turkish fleet, and, by taking a strong position in rear of their army (which rendered a retreat impracticable) he ultimately secures an advantageous peace.

Splendid preparations are now made for the nuptials of Tiran and Carmesina; an event which Tiran had rendered insipid before his last expedition against the Turks. While on his return to Constantinople, after the conclusion of the treaty, he receives orders, at the distance of a day's journey from the city, to wait till the preparations be completed. In this interval, while lounging one day on the banks of a river, and conversing on his happiness with the kings of Ethiopia, Fez, and Sicily, he is seized with a pleurisy, and expires soon after. When this intelligence is brought to Constantinople, the emperor dies of grief; and the demise of the princess on the same day completes the triple mortality. The empress having given orders for the funerals, passes the ensuing night with her lover Hyppolito, who redoubles her impatience to share with him the throne to which she had now succeeded. After a joint reign of three years,



she bequeaths to him the empire, and her place is supplied by a daughter of the king of England.<sup>1</sup>

I have been thus minute in the account of *Tirante the White*, as it is one of the three romances preserved in the scrutiny of Don Quixote's library. "By her taking so many romances together," says Cervantes, "there fell one at the barber's feet, who had a mind to see what it was, and found it to be *Tirante the White*. God save me, quoth the priest, with a loud voice, is *Tirante the White* there? Give me him here, neighbour, for I shall find in him a treasure of delight and a mine of entertainment. Here we have Don Kyrie Eleison of Montalvan, a valorous knight, and his brother Thomas of Montalvan, and the knight Fonseca, and the combat which the valiant Detriante fought with Alano; and the smart conceits of the damsel Plazirdemavida, with the amours and artifices of the widow Reposada, and madam the empress in love with her squire Hyppolito." He then advises the housewife to take it home, and read it; "for though, continues the priest, "the author deserved to be sent to the gallies for writing so many foolish things seriously, yet, in its way,<sup>2</sup> it is the best book in the world. Here the knights eat and sleep, and die in their beds, and make their wills before their death, with several things which are wanting in all other books of this kind."

It cannot, indeed, be denied, that *Tirante the White* is of a nature altogether different from the other romances of chivalry. It possesses much more quaintness and pleasantry. Nor is it occupied with the detached adventures of a dozen different knights; the attention is constantly fixed on the adventures of Tiran, of whom the reader never loses sight, and, except in the account of the fêtes in England, which occupies a small part of the work, there are hardly any tournaments or singal combats. Tiran is more a skilful commander than a valiant knight, and subdues his enemies more by a knowledge in the art

of war, than by his personal courage. In other romances the heroes are only endowed with bravery, all besides is the work of magicians. Tiran, on the contrary, performs nothing incredible, every thing he does lies within the sphere of human capacity. Giants, so prevalent in other romances, are here dwindled to nothing. Kyrie Eleison and his brother Thomas are but meagre monsters. No helpless females are protected, no enchanted castles restored to the ordinary properties of stone and lime. I remember, indeed, no magical story, except that of *Espertius*, who, while on his way from Africa to assist Tiran at Constantinople, is driven on the island of Cos, where he restores the daughter of Hippocrates to her original form. She appeared to him in the shape of a dragon, into which she had been changed by Diana; but, by consenting to kiss her on the mouth, the knight effected her transformation. A belief in a tradition precisely the same is attributed to the inhabitants of Cos, in a book of modern French travels, of which I have forgotten the title. Sir John Mandeville, in his *Travels*, also relates a story somewhat similar. Speaking of an enchanted dragon in the isle of Cos, "a yonge man," says he, "that wiste not of the dragoun, went out of a shippe, and went throghe the isle, till that he cam into the cave; here he saw a damsel who bad him come agen on the morwe, and then come and kysse hire on the mouth, and have no drede, for I schall do the no manner harm, alle be it that thou see me in likeness of a dragoun, for thoughe thou see me hideous and horrible to loken onne, I do the to wyten that it is made be enchantment, for withouten doubt I am none other than thou seest now, an woman, and zyff thou kysse me thou shalt have all this tresure, and be my lord, and lord also of that isle." This ambiguous lady, however, was not the daughter of Hippocrates, the dragon of the Spanish romance, who, according to Sir John Mandeville, frequented a different island, "and some men seyne that in the isle

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated Baron Grimm, "who did not, it seems, add to his other qualifications the charms of an agreeable person, took incredible pains to supply his natural deficiency by the artificial resources of the toilet. The quantity of ceruse, or white paint, with which he daily filled up the lines and wrinkles

of his face, joined to his want of moderation in the enjoyment of his *bonnes fortunes*, procured for him the appellation of *Tyran le Blanc*."

<sup>2</sup> Per su estilo. This has been rendered "in point of style," by some of the translators of Cervantes.



of Lango is yit the daughter of Ypocras, in forme and likenesse of a great dragoun, that is a hundred fadme in length as men seyne, for I have not seen hire, and thei of the isles callen hire Ladie of the Land,"—a fiction which may partly have originated in one of that physician's children being called Draco, a circumstance mentioned by Suidas on the authority of Galen. The story of Espertius and the daughter of Hippocrates was probably conveyed to the author of *Tirante* by some obscure, but prevalent tradition; and, through the medium of this work, a similar incident has been adopted in innumerable tales of wonder, and many romantic poems. In the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth cantos of the second book of Berni's *Orlando Innamorato*, the paladin Brandimarte, after surmounting many obstacles, penetrates into the recesses of an enchanted palace. There he finds a fair damsel seated upon a tomb, who announces to him, that in order to achieve her deliverance, he must raise the lid of the sepulchre, and kiss whatever being should issue forth. The knight, having pledged his faith, proceeds to open the tomb, out of which a monstrous snake raises itself with a tremendous hiss. Brandimarte with much reluctance fulfils the conditions of the adventure, and the monster is instantly changed into a beautiful fairy, who loads her deliverer with benefits (*Scott's Minstrelsy*, vol. ii. p. 84). In the ballad of *Kempion*, the prince of that name effects a similar transformation by a similar effort. There is a like story in the sixth tale of the *Contes Amoureux de Jean Flore*, written toward the end of the 15th century.

The second provincial romance to which I formerly alluded, is that of

#### PARTENOPEX DE BLOIS,<sup>1</sup>

which was written in the Catalan dialect in the 13th century, and printed at Tarragona in 1488. The Castilian translation appeared at Alcala, 1513, 4to, and afterwards in 1547. M. Le Grand, however, has endeavoured to establish that this work was originally French, and informs us that his own modern version,

<sup>1</sup> Libro del esforzado Cavallero Conde Partinuples que fue Emperador de Constantinopla.

appended to his *Contes et Fabliaux*, is made from a manuscript poem in the library of St Germain des Prés, which he conjectures to be of the 12th century.

The Princess Melior succeeded her father Julian in the Greek empire. Though well qualified to govern, from natural talents, and the advantages derived from a knowledge of magic, her subjects insisted on her selecting a husband, but granted two years for the choice. She accordingly despatched emissaries to all the courts of Europe, with instructions to enable these messengers to make a judicious election.

At this time there lived in France a young man, called Partenopex de Blois, who was nephew to the king of Paris. One day, while hunting with his uncle in the forest of Ardennes, he is separated from his party while pursuing a wild boar, and night falling, he loses his way in the woods. On the following day, after long wandering, he comes to the sea-shore, and perceives a splendid vessel moored near the land, which he enters to ascertain if any person were on board, but he finds no one. Now this pinnacle happened to be enchanted, and, disdaining the vulgar operations of a pilot, as soon as Partenopex had embarked, it spontaneously steered a right course, and after a prosperous voyage, arrived in the bay of a delightful country. Vessels of this sort are common in romance. There is one in the beautiful fabliau of Gugemar. In the seventh canto of the *Rinaldo* we have an enchanted bark, which was solely directed by the force of magic, and invariably conducted the knights who entered it to some splendid adventure. A self-navigated gondelay is also introduced in *Spenser's Faery Queen*, (b. ii. c. 6):—

Eftsoones her shallow ship away did slide,  
More swift than swallow sheres the liquid skye,  
Withouten oare or pilot it to guide,  
Or winged canvas with the wind to fly;  
For it was taught the way which she would have,  
And both from rocks and flats itself could wisely  
save.

The finest of these barks is that which conducts the Christian knights, in their search of *Rinaldo*, to the residence of *Armida*. This fiction, however, was not the invention of the middle ages, but is of classical origin; vessels



of this nature being described by Alcinous to Ulysses, in the eighth book of the *Odyssey* :—

So shalt thou instant reach the realms assign'd,  
In wondrous ships self-moved, inspired with mind ;  
No helm secures their course, no pilot guides,  
Like man, intelligent, they plough the tides,  
Conscious of every coast, and every bay,  
That lies beneath the sun's all-seeing ray ;  
Though clouds and darkness veil the encumber'd  
sky,  
Fearless through darkness and through clouds they  
fly.

Partenopex having disembarked from his magical conveyance, approached and entered a castle of marvellous extent and beauty, which stood near the harbour. In the saloon, which was lighted by diamonds, he finds prepared an exquisite repast, but no one appears. Attendance could be the better dispensed with, as the dainties placed themselves of their own accord on his lips. After he had taken advantage of their hospitality, a lighted torch showed him the way to his bed-chamber, where he was undressed by invisible hands. The notion of such a palace, like many other incidents in this romance, must have been suggested by the story of Cupid and Psyche in Apuleius. A similar fiction has been adopted by the earliest romantic poet of Italy : in the second canto of the *Morgante Maggiore*, that giant comes with his master Orlando to a splendid and mysterious castle, in which the apartments are richly furnished, and the table spread with every sort of wines and provisions. After the guests have partaken of a sumptuous repast, they retire to rest on rich couches prepared for their repose, no one having appeared in the course of the entertainment.

When Partenopex had gone to bed, and the lights had been extinguished, a lady entered the apartment, who, after some tedious exposition on the freedom he had used in usurping the usual place of her repose, evinced a strong determination not to be put out of her way. In the course of the night his companion acquaints him that she is Melior of Constantinople, who, it will be remembered, was a great empress, and a fairy at the same time. Having fallen in love with Partenopex, on report of her emissaries, she had contrived the enchantments he had lately

witnessed. She farther intimated, that he was to remain at her castle, but that he would forfeit her affections if he attempted to obtain a sight of her person before the lapse of two years ; a deprivation for which she seemed disposed to compensate by the most ample gratification of his other senses. In the morning the most splendid habiliments were brought him by Uracla, the sister of the empress fairy. Having dogs and horses at his command, he usually spent the day in hunting, and in the evenings was entertained by a concert from invisible musicians.

Anxious, at length, to revisit his native country, which he learned had been attacked by foreign enemies, Partenopex hazarded an exposition of his wishes to his mistress, who, after exacting a promise of return, accommodates him with the magic sloop in which he had arrived, and which in a short while conveys him to France. On the evening he landed he sets out for Paris, and on his way meets with a knight, whom he discovers to be Gaudin, the lover of Uracla. The strictest intimacy arises between these two persons after a dreadful combat ; a mode of introduction, which, though now fallen into disuse, was the usual commencement of friendship in those chivalrous ages :—

Deux Chevaliers qui se sont bien battus,  
Soit à Cheval, soit à la noble escrime,  
Avec le sabre ou de longs fers pointus,  
De pied en cap tout couverts, ou tout nus,  
Ont l'un pour l'autre une secrete estime ;  
Et chacun d'eux exalte les vertus  
Et les grands coups de son digne adversaire,  
Lorsque surtout il n'est plus en colere :  
Mais s'il advient, après ce beau conflit,  
Quelque accident—quelque triste fortune,  
Quelque misere à tous les deux commune,  
Incontinent, le Malheur les unit ;  
L' Amitié nait de leurs destins contraires,  
Et deux heros persécutés sont Freres.

*La Pucelle, Preface au chant ix.*

“Expell'd their native homes by adverse fate,  
They knock'd alternate at each other's gate ;  
Then blazed the castle at the midnight hour  
For him whose arms had shook its firmest tower.”

Soon after the arrival of Partenopex in France, Angelica, the pope's niece, who was at this time residing at the court of Paris, falls in love with him, and in order to detach him from his engagement with the fairy,



which she had discovered by means of an intercepted letter, she employs a holy man, who repaired to Partenopex, and denounced Melior as a demon. He found that her lover was proof against an insinuation with regard to his mistress possessing a serpent's tail, which he begged to be excused from crediting, but that he was somewhat startled by the assurance, that she had a black skin, white eyes, and red teeth.

Partenopex having returned to the residence of the fairy, resolves to satisfy himself the first night he passes in her company, as to the truth of her possessing the perfections attributed to her in France. On raising a lamp to her countenance, he has the satisfaction to find she has been cruelly traduced; but, as she unfortunately awakes, from a drop of wax falling on her bosom, he incurs her utmost resentment. His life is spared at the intercession of Uracla, but, being forced to leave the castle, he repairs to the forest of Ardennes, having adopted the scheme of presenting his person as food for the wild beasts, with which that district abounded. This consummation, however desirable, was retarded by unaccountable circumstances; for though tantalized during a whole night by the roaring of lions and hissing of serpents, who gave repeated demonstrations of accommodating the knight, the provoking animals avoided all personal intercourse, and one of the monsters selected the horse of Partenopex in preference to his master. The neighings of the steed brought Uracla to the spot, who had set out in quest of Partenopex on perceiving some relenting symptoms on the part of her sister. Partenopex, all hopes of personal deglutition being at an end, consented to accompany Uracla to her castle in Tenedos, there to await the resolves of the empress fairy. Leaving Partenopex in this abode, Uracla set out on a visit to her sister, and, relying on the prowess of Partenopex, persuaded her to declare that she would bestow her hand on the victor, in a tournament she was about to proclaim. The princesses of romance frequently offer their hand to the conqueror in a tournament, perhaps on the same principle on which Bayle says Penelope promised to espouse the suitor who should bend the bow of Ulysses.

While preparations were making for the tournaments, Parseis, an attendant of Uracla, having become enamoured of Partenopex, took him out one day in a boat. After some time, Partenopex remarked to her the distance they were from land. The damsel then made an unequivocal declaration of attachment, and confessed she had recourse to this stratagem to have an opportunity for the avowal. Partenopex, who perhaps saw no insurmountable objection to a communication of this nature on shore, began to express much dissatisfaction at his cruise; but his complaints were interrupted by a tempest, which drove the vessel to the coast of Syria; Partenopex, being forced to land, was seized by the natives, and became the prisoner of King Herman. During his captivity, the sultan of Persia ordered this tributary monarch to accompany him to the tournaments which were about to be celebrated at Constantinople. After his departure, Partenopex having contrived to interest the queen in his behalf, was allowed to escape, and arrived in the capital of the eastern empire just as the tournaments commenced. His most formidable antagonist was the sultan of Persia, but Partenopex is at length, by his strength and courage, permitted to lay claim to the hand of the rejoiced and forgiving empress.

The romance of Partenopex is obviously derived from the fable of Cupid and Psyche, so beautifully told by Apuleius. Psyche is borne on the wings of Zephyr to the palace of her divine admirer. Partenopex is transported in a self-navigated bark, before a favourable breeze, to the mansion of Melior. Both are entertained at a banquet produced by invisible agency, and similar restrictions on curiosity are imposed: both are seduced into disobedience by the false insinuations of friends, and adopt the same method of clearing up their suspicions. Banishment, and a forfeiture of favour, are the punishments inflicted on both; and, after a long course of penance, both are restored to the affections of their supernatural admirers. These resemblances are too close to permit us to doubt, that the story of Psyche has, directly or indirectly, furnished materials for the fiction with which we have been engaged. Some of the incidents in Partenopex have also a close resemblance to the story of



the Prince of Futtun and Mherbanou, in the Bahar-Danush, or Garden of Knowledge. That work was indeed posterior to the composition of Partenopex; but the author Inatulla acknowledges that it was compiled from Brahmin traditions. The Peri, who is the heroine of that tale, is possessed of a barge covered with jewels, which steered without sails or oars; and the prince, while in search of its incomparable mistress, arrives at a palace, in which he finds the richest effects and preparations for festivity, but no person appears.

Partenopex de Blois was translated into German, probably from the French *romans*, as early as the 13th century, the hero and his mistress being denominated Partenopier and Meliure. It has also been recently versified by Mr Rose. The subject is happily chosen, as the romantic nature of the incidents,

and tenderness of the amatory descriptions, are highly susceptible of poetical embellishment. Melior's enchanted palace is thus described:—

Fast by the margin of the tumbling flood,  
Crown'd with embattled towers, a castle stood.  
The marble walls a chequer'd field display'd,  
With stones of many-colour'd hues inlaid;  
Tall mills, with crystal streams encircled round,  
And villages, with rustic plenty crown'd—  
There, fading in the distance, woods were seen  
With gaily glittering spires, and battlements  
between.

Beneath the porch, in rich mosaic, blaze  
The sun, and silver lamp that drinks his rays.  
Here stood the symbol'd elements portray'd,  
And nature all her secret springs display'd:  
Here too was seen whate'er of earlier age,  
Or later time, had graced the historic page;  
And storied loves of knights and courtly dames,  
Pageants and triumphs, tournaments and games.

## CHAPTER VI.

Romances of Chivalry relating to Classical and Mythological Heroes.—Livre de Jason.—  
La vie de Hercule.—Alexandre, &c.

It has been suggested in a former part of this work, that many arbitrary fictions of romance are drawn from the classical and mythological authors; and in the summary given of the tales of chivalry, a few instances have been pointed out, in which the ancient stories of Greece have been introduced, modified merely by the manners of the age.

Since so much of the machinery of romance has been derived from classical fiction, it would have been strange had not the heroes of antiquity been also enlisted under the banners of chivalry. Accordingly we find that Achilles, Jason, and Hercules, were early adopted into romance, and celebrated in common with the knights of the Round Table, the paladins of Charlemagne, and the imaginary lineage of Amadis and Palmerin.

And though the purer streams of classical learning were probably withheld from the

romancers of the middle ages, spurious materials were not wanting to make them in some degree "conscious of a former time."

The "Tale of Troy Divine" had been kept alive in two Latin works, which passed under the names of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis. The former was a Trojan priest, mentioned by Homer,<sup>1</sup> and was believed to have written an account of the destruction of Troy. Ælian mentions that the history of Dares Phrygius was extant in his time, but he probably refers to some spurious author who had assumed that appellation. At length an obscure writer, posterior to the age of Constantine, availing himself of this tradition, wrote a book which he entitled *De Excidio Trojæ*, and which professed to be translated from the work of Dares Phrygius, by Cornelius Nepos. A pretended epistle is prefixed, as addressed by the translator to Sallust, in which

<sup>1</sup> The sons of Dares first the combat sought,  
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault;

In Vulcan's fane the father's days were led,  
The sons to toils of glorious battle bred.

POPE'S *Iliad*, b. 5.



he informs his friend that he had discovered a MS. in the hand-writing of Dares, while studying at Athens, where that historian had always been held in higher estimation than Homer, &c. The forgery, sheltered under these specious names, was a current and credited manuscript in the middle ages, and was first published at Milan in 1477.

The work which bears the name of Dictys Cretensis is much longer and better written than the composition of Dares Phrygius. It is a prose Latin history, in six books, containing an account of the Trojan war, and the fate of the Grecian chiefs after their return. The author has principally drawn his materials from the Iliad, but has also pillaged other poems and histories, which contained information on the subject. In the preface to this work, it is said, that in the reign of Nero, the sepulchre of Dictys, who had been a follower of Idomeneus in the Trojan war, was thrown open by an earthquake, which shook the city of Gnosus in Crete. In the gap there was a chest found by some peasants, who carried it to their master Eupraxis. By him it was transmitted to Nero, and was then found to contain the history of the wars of Ilium, by Dictys Cretensis. After the preface follows the dedicatory epistle from Septimius to Quintus Arcadius, who lived in the reign of Constantine. Septimius professes himself to be the Latin translator of the work, and says he had rendered it into that language from the copy Eupraxis transmitted to Nero, and in which that Cretan had merely substituted Greek letters for the Phœnician characters, in which it was originally written. Now the commonly received opinion, and that maintained by the commentators Vossius, Mercerus, and Madame Dacier, is, that every thing here is a fiction: that it is false that a Trojan history was written by Dictys; that it is equally untrue that any work of this nature was presented to Nero by Eupraxis; that even the letter of Septimius is a forgery; and that the work was written several ages posterior to the time of Constantine, by an unknown author, who feigned the story of the transmission to Nero, and the translation by Septimius. It is certain, however, that there did at one time exist a Greek work on the Trojan war, under the name of Dictys Cretensis.

Of this several fragments are preserved by Cedrenus in his annals, and the book has been used by Malela in his history. These Greek fragments and quotations, and also the title of the work, coincide pretty nearly with portions of the Latin Dictys. It is not, therefore, altogether improbable (as has been attempted to be shown by Perizonius, in a very ingenious dissertation), that the work was originally a forgery of Eupraxis, and by him presented as an antique to Nero: that Septimius in reality translated it from the Greek of Eupraxis, and that the Greek fragments in Cedrenus and Malela are parts of the forgery of Eupraxis.

In the histories of Dares and Dictys, every thing that related to mythology and the fights of the gods was expunged; and thus in the Tale of Troy, a vacancy was left for the introduction of romantic embellishment. The story was first versified in the metrical composition of Benoit de Saint More, an Anglo-Norman poet, who lived in the reign of Henry the Second of England. He took the groundwork of events from the writings of Dares and Dictys; comprehended in his plan the Theban and Argonautic expeditions, and grafted on these incidents many new romantic inventions, dictated by the taste of his age.

This metrical work, as has been shown by Mr Douce, is the same in incident and decoration with the Latin prose chronicle of Guido de Colonna, who was formerly believed to have wrought solely from his own fancy; and from the materials of Dares and Dictys, as, according to a usual practice in the middle age, he concealed his originals. Guido de Colonna was a native of Messina; he undertook his work at the request of the bishop of Salerno, and completed it, as he himself informs us, in 1287, more than a hundred years subsequent to the composition of its metrical prototype. This grand repertory of fiction, which is in fifteen books, is entitled *Historia de Bello Trojano*. Dares and Dictys were superseded by this improved and comprehensive story of the Grecian heroes, who were now decked out in the fashion of the age. Achilles and Hector were complete heroes or chivalry, and Thersites a dwarf; the walls of Ilium were of marble, and the palace of Priam was as splendid as any enchanted castle in the tales of chivalry. The chronicle of Colonna



commences with Jason's expedition in quest of the Golden Fleece, and the first destruction of the city of Laomedon by that hero and Hercules. A new Troy, rebuilt by Priam, was besieged for ten years by the Greeks, and was at last delivered into their hands by the treachery of Antenor and Æneas, who, on pretence of negotiating a treaty, concerted with the enemy the means of carrying off the Paladium, and of introducing the fatal horse into the city. In the conclusion of the work, the misfortunes of the Grecian chiefs on their return home are related. The story of the death of Ulysses has much the appearance of an oriental fiction. After his arrival in Greece, it was foretold to that hero that he should perish by the hand of his son. Not being aware that he had any other child than Telemachus, he thought he provided sufficiently for security by shutting him up in a strong fortress. It happened, however, that Circe had borne a son to Ulysses after his departure from her enchanted island, who having learned the secret of his birth, when he grew up set out in quest of his father, and arrived in Ithaca; but being refused admittance at the entrance to the palace, he attacked the guards. Ulysses himself issued forth to their assistance, and, not being known by his son, fell a sacrifice to his rage, and thus accomplished the prediction. As the act was involuntary, the youth was hospitably entertained by Telemachus, and after being knighted by him, was dismissed with due honour. Causaubon informs us that this catastrophe formed the plot of a tragedy, by Sophocles, on the death of Ulysses, not now extant.

The Chronicle of Colonna was very generally read in the middle ages; but the classical stories were still more widely diffused in *Les cent Histoires de Troye, en Rime*, which were written in the 14th century, and are not confined to the tale of Troy, but include the whole history of the heroic ages.

This metrical production formed the foundation of the *Recuyel des Histoires de Troye*, written in prose by Raoul le Febre about the middle of the 15th century. Like the work from which it was derived, it comprehends all the fabulous periods of Greece. The first part contains the *beautiful* domestic story of Jupiter and Saturn, the feats of Perseus,

and first building of Troy: the second details the exploits of Hercules, and the third recounts the destruction of Troy by the Greeks. This compilation was printed by Caxton, without date, and is generally believed to be the first impression executed by that celebrated printer. Afterwards, at the desire of Margaret, duchess of Burgundy, he translated the *Recuyel des Histoires de Troye* into English, and in 1471 published his version at Ghent and Cologne, which was the first book printed in the English language.

From the materials above mentioned there were formed a number of prose romances, which presented mythological characters in the guise of chivalry. In these works, the demi-gods and nymphs of paganism are not drawn as divinities or genii, but as kings and knights, and ladies of Greece and Asia. The adventures are no doubt abundantly chimerical, but are such as might have happened to mortals endued with superior qualities, or supposed to be under the influence of enchantment.

Of this class of romances, the first editions were printed without date, but were for the most part published in the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century. The period of the composition of some of them can be ascertained more accurately than that of most other tales of chivalry.

Εἰθ' ἀφελ' Ἀργεὺς μὴ διαττασθαι σκαφος, but it was natural that the story of Medea, which is drawn from the earliest traditions of Greece, should have been adopted in romance. That terrific magician was the heroine of three epic poems, and had for ages been seated on the pinnacle of tragic renown; the traditions concerning her were, consequently, of all others the most current, and had been amply detailed in the metrical romance of Benoît de Sainte More, and the chronicle of Colonna. Besides, the story of Jason and Medea must, of all classical fables, have been the most captivating to the imagination of a romancer. It bore a striking analogy to the fictions of the middle ages, especially those concerning the paladins of Charlemagne, in which we have so often beheld eastern princesses betraying and deserting their kindred for the sake of a favourite knight.

The author of the romance of JASON AND



MEDEA<sup>1</sup> calls himself Raoul le Febre : his work is addressed to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, probably because this prince was founder of the order called Le Toison d'Or. Philip succeeded to the dukedom in 1419, and died in 1467, so that the composition of the romance must be fixed some time between these two periods. The first French edition is without date. An English translation was printed by Caxton, in 1475.

Jason, prince of the Myrmidons, from his earliest youth, distinguished himself at tournaments. In one, which was held by the King of Bœotia to solemnize the reception of his son prince Hercules into the order of chivalry, he overthrew all his antagonists. From Bœotia, Jason and Hercules being associated in a fraternity of arms, proceeded to attend the celebration of the marriage of Hippodamia. The nuptial festivals were unpleasantly interrupted by an inroad of the Centaurs ; but, notwithstanding the advantages possessed by these creatures in point of shape, they were exterminated by Jason. His next exploit was freeing Queen Mirro from an unwelcome lover (who was making his advances by besieging her capital), which Jason accomplished by slaying a giant, who was the suitor's champion.

On his return home, by the malevolence of his uncle Peleus, he was sent on the Argonautic expedition, which his enemies believed a desperate undertaking. In this enterprise he was accompanied by Hercules, who stopped on the voyage to predict the destruction of the town of Laomedon. Hercules had rescued this prince's daughter from a monster, to whom she had nearly fallen a prey ; but when he asked her in marriage, as his reward, from the father, he was refused, and the sarcastic monarch had subjoined, that it was not worth while to recover his daughter from the paws of one monster to deliver her into the arms of another.

The fleet afterwards reached Lemnos, where the Grecian knights were received in the same manner as in mythology, and were long remembered by the fair inhabitants of that island.

<sup>1</sup> Livre du Preux et vaillant Jason et de la belle Medée.

After the arrival of the expedition at Colchos, the love of Medea, and the conquest of the Golden Fleece, are related nearly as in the classical fictions. At his departure, Jason carried Medea along with him : by her enchantments she raised a storm, while passing the Isle of Lemnos, and prevented the landing, which seems to have been intended. On arriving at the country of the Myrmidons she was well received by the old king, whom, by the most potent incantations, she restored to youth and vigour, so that he became "fort enclin a chanter, danser, et faire toutes choses joyeuses ; et qui plus est, il regardoit moult volentiers les belles damoiselles." The sorceress also exhibited great political talents in the depression of the influence of Peleus. At last, pretending to prepare for him a similar renovation as for her brother, she accomplished his death. His daughters, having complained of this usage to the king, he sentenced the enchantress to banishment, with the concurrence of Jason, who previously left the country, that he might not be witness to her disgrace. Medea poured forth a torrent of abuse on the ingratitude of the king for the services she had rendered him, among which she considered the renovation of Peleus as the chief. She rejected with marked contempt the vessel he offered to convey her from his states ; and with a stroke of her ring secured the attendance of four winged dragons, whose tails, being properly interwoven, formed a commodious chariot ; then taking up the two children she had by Jason, she set off at full speed in this unusual conveyance, in presence of King Eason and his astonished Myrmidons.

Long the fugitive magician soared over Greece without discovering any trace of Jason, for whom she still retained her former affection. At length, while hovering over the town of Corinth, she had a bird's-eye view of preparations for a great festival. On her descent she learned that these were for the approaching marriage of Jason with the princess of Corinth. Though fired with jealousy, she suspended the execution of her vengeance till the eve of the nuptials. When the ceremony was at length about to commence, she burst from a thick cloud, which opened amid thunder and light-



ning, and, perching on the spot where the rites were celebrating, appeared with a poniard in her hand, which she plunged into the bosoms of her two children, who were along with her; while the dragons, who were also of the party, vomited forth flames, which consumed Corinth and all its inhabitants.

Hitherto Medea has made a formidable appearance, and has been *ferox invictaque*, as Horace could have desired her. Towards the conclusion of the romance, however, she acts a most despicable part. She inveigles into an unsuitable marriage, Egeus, king of Athens, who was then in his dotage; but she was afterwards banished, on being falsely suspected of an attempt to poison Prince Theseus, son of Egeus. Thus humiliated, she again set out on her wanderings; and as Jason, who alone had escaped from the late conflagration, was employed in a similar manner, he arrived one day at the verge of a forest, where he entered a hut in which Medea had sought refuge. Jason, softened by the remembrance of former affection and services, proposed a reconciliation. Medea, on her part, agreed to abjure magic, and became on the death of King Eson, which happened soon after, *bonne et douce femme et reine*.

In the above romance, the principal amusement arises from the curious application of Gothic manners and fictions to classical characters. Yet the work in itself is not altogether destitute of merit. It has been remarked in Mr Dibdin's *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, "that, compared with many other tales of chivalry, there are few wearisome episodes and few digressions in the romance of Jason. The hero is generally kept in view, while his uniform and almost systematic treachery towards ladies, who had surrendered to him their honour, is softened down in a manner not studiously or obtrusively disgusting. The general sentiments of this romance are completely chivalrous, and the hardy exploits and perilous escapes of the hero are varied by numerous little touches of domestic life and common-place adventure. On the whole, there is much natural and beautiful colouring in this performance."

Raoul le Febre, who wrote the romance of

Jason and Medea, is also the author of that of *HERCULES*,<sup>1</sup> which, as he informs us in the body of the work, was written in 1463. It has been published separately, but originally formed part of the more extensive composition, entitled *Recueil d'Histoires Troyennes*. Of all heroes of antiquity, the *Vagus Hercules* bore the nearest resemblance to a knight errant; and hence his adventures must have been wonderfully attractive to the imagination of a romancer. His story commences with the well-known stratagem of King Jove and his squire Mercury, which produced the hero of the romance. When he grows up, his labours are not undergone on account of the edict of Jupiter, or the wrath of Juno, but are spontaneously undertaken to render himself deserving of a Boeotian princess, of whom he is enamoured. The detail of the performance of his labours has received a colouring consistent with the origin attributed to them. Pluto is a king who resides in a gloomy castle: the Fates are duennas, who watch the actions of Proserpine, and the entrance to the castle is guarded by the giant Cerberus; who, according to this enlightened author, was believed a dog by the poets and the vulgar. A considerable part of the romance is occupied with the conquest of Spain by Hercules. He took Merida from Geryon, who was feigned to have three heads, because he was originally lord of the three Balearic islands; and having pursued him from place to place, at length slew him near the foot of a castle, which was thenceforth called Gerona.

The romance of *OEDIPUS* was written about the same time with that of Hercules. Of his story, the outline is nearly the same as in the ancient Greek authors. The Sphinx, however, is a giant of ferocious courage, and of a subtlety, which, in books of chivalry, is very rarely coupled with exuberant dimensions.

We have already seen that Alexander the Great was a leading character in the early part of *Perceforest*; but there is a work, entitled the *HISTORY OF ALEXANDER*,<sup>2</sup> which is devoted to the celebration of his exploits. The Macedonian hero was chiefly indebted for romantic embellishment to a fabulous life of him, which appeared in Greek about

<sup>1</sup> *La Vie du preux et vaillant Hercule.*

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de Roy Alexandre jadis roy et seigneur*

*de tout le monde, et des grandes prouesses qu'il a faites en son temps.*



the middle of the 11th century, during the reign of the Emperor Michael Ducas, and which passed under the name of Calisthenes, who was a contemporary of Alexander. This spurious work was written by Simeon Seth, keeper of a palace of Constantinople, and was in a great measure translated from Persic traditions, an origin which accounts for the fables that have crept into it. Eastern romances, particularly the Persian, are full of incredible fictions concerning Alexander, or Iskender, as he is called. In one of these, by Mahmed el Kermanni, Alexander, while prosecuting his conquests on the frontiers of China, encounters a monstrous dragon which had ravaged a whole kingdom; and in an island of the Indian ocean, he sees men with wings, &c. The work of Simeon Seth, compiled from such materials, and filled with arbitrary fictions concerning Alexander, was early communicated to the west of Europe by means of a Latin version, which became the foundation of two metrical romances. Of these the first was written in 1184, by Lambert li Cors, with the assistance of Alexander of Paris; a production which has given rise to the name of those lines called Alexandrian, from a false idea that it was the first poem in which that measure was employed. Thomas of Kent is the author of the second metrical romance on the subject of Alexander, which, he says, is taken from the Latin, meaning probably the translation from Simeon Seth. The incidents in the prose romance of Alexander have been compiled from these two metrical works: Its author has chiefly availed himself of the poem of Lambert li Cors; but he has been indebted to the composition of Thomas of Kent for the whole story of Olympia and Nectanebus, which does not occur in the former production.

The date of the prose Alexander is nearly the same with that of the above-mentioned romances of Hercules and Jason, and it was printed towards the close of the 15th century. It is not till the ancient history of Macedon has been detailed, that the author gives the following account of the birth of his hero. Nectanebus, who was an Egyptian king, and a great necromancer, dreading an attack from the King of Persia, magnanimously embarked for Greece, in the disguise of a priest of Jupiter

Ammon. Adorned with the symbols of that divinity, he visited Olympia, Queen of Macedon, who, in the absence of her husband, was then residing in a remote castle, and he soon after became the father of Alexander. On the return of Philip, who had been long from home, the queen attributed her suspicious pregnancy to the intervention of Jupiter himself. In confirmation of this, Nectanebus afterwards by his art introduced at court a voluminous, but docile dragon, who saluted the king, and, so far from feeling abashed at the presence of the courtiers, caressed her majesty to the infinite astonishment of Philip and the Macedonians. Nectanebus also insinuated himself into the favour of Philip, and when Alexander grew up was appointed his preceptor. That prince, as he advanced in years, displayed much greatness of mind; but he was diminutive in person, and his head leaned to one side, like that of Nectanebus. Hence the courtiers were wont to remark, that in form he much resembled the priest of Jupiter, but that his soul came from Jupiter himself. The amour of Nectanebus with Olympia has been introduced by Gower into the sixth book of his *Confessio Amantis*, as it is related in the romance.

After the death of his father, Alexander, previous to the conquest of Persia, embarked for Italy, subdued Rome, and received tribute from all the European nations. The account of his Persian expedition is somewhat consistent with history, but the most incredible wonders are added to his Indian conquests. Thus Alexander came among a nation who placed their delight in eating human flesh, and made war solely for the purpose of replenishing their Garde-Manger. Having jostled with Porus for his kingdom, and overthrown him, he found in the palace of the vanquished monarch immense treasures, and among other wonders a vine, of which the branches were gold, the leaves emeralds, and the fruit other precious stones; a fiction which seems to have been suggested by the golden vine which Pompey carried away from Jerusalem. One chapter in this part of the work bears the following title, "*Comment Alexandre trouva femmes qui tant font gesir les hommes avec elles que l'ame leur part du corps.*" In a neighbouring district



he beheld women, who, after being interred during winter, sprung to life on the approach of summer, with renovated grace and beauty ; or, as it is prettily expressed in the metrical romance of Lambert li Cors,

Quant l' esté revient, et le beau temps s' espure,  
En guise de fleur blanche reviennent a nature.

Finally, having reached the extremity of the world, having received homage from all nations who inhabit its surface, and being assured that there remained nothing more to conquer, Alexander formed the inconsiderate project of becoming sovereign of the air and deep. By the conjurations of the eastern professors of magic, whom he consulted, he was furnished with a glass cage of enormous dimensions, yoked with eight griffins well matched. Having seated himself in this conveyance, he posted through the empire of the air, accompanied by magicians, who understood the language of birds, and asked at the most intelligent natives the proper questions concerning their laws, manners, and customs, while Alexander received their voluntary submissions. This aerial journey, like most of the fictions concerning Alexander, is of eastern origin. An old Arabian writer, in a book called Malem, informs us that Nimrod being frustrated in his attempt to build the tower of Babel, insisted on being carried through the air in a cage borne by four monstrous birds (D'Herbelot, Bib. Orient. *Nimrod*). The notion of comprehending the language of birds is also oriental. This faculty was attributed by the eastern nations to Solomon, who, when he travelled on his magic carpet, with his soldiers on his right hand, and on the left the genii, was always attended by flights of birds, which sheltered his army from the sun (Sale's Koran). The idea, however, seems to have passed at an early period into Europe ; Gerbert, or Sylvester II., is said to have acquired it while at Seville, from the Moors, and in an old Scandinavian romance, Sigurd attains this accomplishment by supping broth made of the flesh of dragons.

It is impossible to conjecture how high Alexander might have mounted, or what important information he might have derived from the birds, had he not been compelled to descend from the clouds by the *intolerable heat* of these upper regions. On his return

from this aerial excursion, he resolved to cool himself, and to ascertain how the great fish behaved to the little ones, by descending to the bottom of the deep in a species of diving-bell. The fish, as he expected, crowded round the machine, and paid him their humblest homage. It is remarkable that a similar story is mentioned by one of the old Welsh bards (Davies' Celtic Researches, p. 196), and Mr Southey, in his notes to Madoc, says, that it was pointed out to him by Mr Coleridge, in one of the most ancient German poems.

When Alexander had received the obeisance of the fish, he returned to Babylon, where he was crowned with due pomp, and mass was performed with proper solemnity. Soon after his coronation he was treacherously poisoned, an event which had been presaged by the salamanders, of which he had found a large supply in the menagerie of the kings of Persia, and had always kept good fires for their subsistence and entertainment. As an acknowledgment for this hospitality they foretold his death, but their prediction did not meet from him the attention which it merited.

The Cyclus of romances relating to classical heroes, of which I have now enumerated the most important, are perhaps chiefly interesting, as having supplied copious materials to our English poets of the earliest school. Adam Davies' Lyfe of Alexander is derived from the metrical romances on that prince's exploits : Lydgate's Troy Book is almost a paraphrase of the chronicle of Colonna, and many of the stories introduced by Gower in his Confessio Amantis, may be traced to the same origin. Such spurious chronicles, and the romances founded on them, were the primary source of all those metrical compositions enumerated in the *Cursor Mundi* :

Of Julius Caesar the emperour,  
Of Alexander the conquerour,  
Of Greece and Troy, the strong stryf  
Where many a man lost his lyf.

It was to be expected that the age which exhibited the heroes of Greece as knights errant, should represent the poets and sages of antiquity as necromancers and wizards. Of all distinguished characters, Virgil seems to have fallen most strongly under this suspicion, and the story of his amours and incan-



tations has formed the subject of a very curious romance of chivalry and magic. It has been doubted whether the sorcerer Vergilius was the same with the Roman poet; but it appears from the authors of the 14th and 15th centuries, that such at least was the prevailing opinion in the dark ages. This receives confirmation from the necromancer's connection with Naples, and the castle which he is said to have possessed in the suburbs of Rome. In the commencement, too, of the romance, Vergilius is unjustly deprived of his inheritance, wherein he is afterwards reinstated by favour of the emperor, which seems to identify him with that poet, who, under the character of Tityrus, has acknowledged his restoration by Augustus to the lands from which he had been driven, in such pathetic bursts of gratitude.

How Virgil acquired the character of an adept in magic, forms a curious subject of inquiry. Naudæus, in his Apology for great men suspected of practising that art, conceives that the absurd opinions entertained concerning Virgil, originated in the Pharmaceutria of his eighth eclogue, where he hath so learnedly discussed whatever relates to magic—the *Vittas molles—verbenas pingues—thura mascula*, and

*Carmina quae coelo possunt deducere Lunam.*

This belief in the magical powers of Virgil may have received confirmation from the sixth book of the *Æneid*, in which the secrets of the world unknown are so mysteriously revealed:—

*Dii, quibus imperium est animarum, umbraeque  
silentes;*

*Et Chaos, et Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia late,  
Sit mihi fas audita loqui; sit numine vestro  
Pandere res alta terra et caligine mersas.*

In addition to this, nothing more readily conferred the character of a magician than a knowledge of mathematics, a science in which Virgil is said to have made considerable proficiency. The report, besides, whether true or false, that Virgil had ordered his books to be burnt, may have created the suspicion, that in these he had disclosed the mysteries of the black art, especially as he lived during the reign of an emperor who ordered all magical works to be destroyed.

In whatever way it may have originated, the belief in the magic powers of Virgil appears to have prevailed as soon as mankind lost the refinement of taste, which enabled them to appreciate his exquisite productions. It may be fairly conjectured, that the notion of several of the necromantic operations, attributed to Virgil, was derived from the east. The leading incident in this romance, of Vergilius releasing the fiend from his state of confinement, and subsequently cheating him into a return to his prison, is familiar to us from its similarity to the tale, in the 11th and following nights of the Arabian Entertainments, of the Fisherman and Genie, which is said to be still a prevalent eastern superstition. Virgil's intrigue with the soldan's daughter also resembles many of the adventures introduced in oriental romance, and the tales of chivalry derived from the east.

The fictions concerning the magic powers of Virgil were first incorporated about the beginning of the 13th century, in the *Otia Imperialia* of Gervase of Tilbury, chancellor of the Emperor Otho IV., to whom he presented his extravagant compilation. In this work, which is fraught with incredible fables of every description, we are told that the wise Virgil set up a brazen fly on one of the gates of Naples, which remained there for eight years, and during that period permitted no other fly to enter the city. On another gate he placed two immense images of stone; one of which was said to be handsome and merry, and its fellow sad and deformed. These images possessed this magic influence, that if any person entering the city came near the former statue, every thing prospered according to his desires, as he who approached the latter was inevitably unfortunate and disappointed. Virgil also made a public fire, whereat every one might freely warm himself, and near it he placed a brazen archer, with bow and arrows, bearing the inscription—"If any one strike I will shoot off my arrow;" this at length happened when a certain fool striking the archer, he shot him with his arrow, and sent him into the fire, which was forthwith extinguished. Gervase also informs us, that having visited Naples, he was himself witness to many of these wonders which yet remained, and was informed concerning the others by



his host, the Archdeacon Pinatellus, by whom he was entertained in that city.

These fables were transcribed by Helinandus, the monk who was contemporary with Gervase, into his Universal Chronicle, and were also introduced by Alexander Neckam, an English Benedictine, who studied at Paris early in the 13th century, into his work, *De Naturis Rerum* (book 6), with many important additions. In particular, we are told, that Virgil constructed a brazen bridge, which carried him wherever he pleased, and also that he formed those statues, which were called Preservers of Rome; for as soon as any country revolted, or took up arms against the empire, the image representing that nation rung a bell which hung around its neck, and pointed to the inscribed name of the rebellious state. Similar fables concerning Virgil have been mentioned by Paracelsus, and Gower in his *Confessio Amantis*, while the stories of the public fire, and the statues, preservers of Rome, have been related at full length in the *Seven Wise Masters*.

Such works supplied ample materials for the old French romance of *Virgilius*, of which there are two editions extant, one in 4to, the other 8vo, both printed at Paris, and both without date. That production was the basis of the English *Lyfe of Virgilius*, which, however, varies in some particulars from its original.

In the commencement of this work, *Virgilius* is represented as living under the Emperor Persydes, who appears, according to the chronology of the romance, to have reigned soon after the time of Romulus. *Virgilius* being wise and subtle in his youth, was placed at school, but while there he received more instruction in consequence of a holiday adventure, than he derived from all the lessons of his teachers. While roaming among the hills in the neighbourhood of Tolentum, he perceived and entered a deep hole in the side of one of the highest, and when he had penetrated a considerable way, he heard the voice of a fiend, who entreated that he would deliver him from confinement, by removing a board by which he was spell-bound. In return for this service he offered him a choice and valuable collection of books on necromancy, which would instruct him in the mysteries of

that art. *Virgilius* having removed the board, the devil came out like an eel, and then stood before him like a big man. Having thus obtained possession of the fiend's library, *Virgilius* conceived that his property would be more secure if he could again enclose the former owner in the hole from which he had issued. He accordingly defied him to return, and the demon being piqued at the implied doubt of his powers, wrought his way into the hole, where he was immediately shut up by *Virgilius* placing the board at the aperture, and will in all probability remain imprisoned, since he has irrecoverably lost the literary treasure by which he might again tempt the curious in magic to render him assistance.

It has already been suggested, that this fiction must have been derived from the story near the commencement of the *Arabian Entertainments*, of a fisherman, who, having cast his nets, drew up a small copper vessel, with a leaden seal on it, which being removed, a thick smoke issued forth, and formed itself into an enormous genie, who threatened to slay his deliverer. The fisherman pretended to disbelieve that he had actually been confined in the small copper vessel, and adjured him again to enter it that he might be convinced. On this the body of the genie dissolving in mist, made its way into the vessel, in which the fisherman instantly sealed him up with the leaden seal, which had been originally stamped with the signet of Solomon.

In one of the French *Fabliaux*, entitled *Lai d' Hippocrate* (*Le Grand*, vol. i. p. 232), there is an absurd story of that physician being pulled half way up a tower in a basket, by a lady of whom he was enamoured, and then left suspended, that he might be exposed to the ridicule of the multitude. A similar story is related of *Virgilius* on his first arrival at Rome; the romancers and poets of the middle ages taking delight to exhibit the greatest and wisest characters as victims to the power of love.

From gratitude to the emperor, who restored an inheritance of which he had been unjustly deprived, *Virgilius* constructed for him a palace, in which he saw and heard all that was said or done in every quarter of the city. We are also told how he made an ever-blooming orchard, the statues, called preservers of



Rome, already mentioned, and a lamp which lighted the whole city, but which was at length broken, in a manner borrowed from the story of Gervase of Tilbury, concerning the fire and the archer. There follows the account of his amour with the soldan's daughter, whom he carried off from her father's court, and built for her accommodation the town of Naples, which he founded upon eggs, a tradition which still prevails among the Lazzaroni of that city. He also made a metal serpent in Rome, and whoever put his hand into the serpent's throat was to swear his cause was right and true; and if he took a false oath, the hand was infallibly bitten off. It is curious that at this day there is a chapel at Rome, called Santa Maria, built in the first ages of the church, and which is likewise denominated "*Bocca della verita*," on account of a large round mask, with an enormous mouth, fixed up in the vestibule. Tradition says, that in former times the Romans, in order to give a more solemn confirmation to oaths, were wont to put their hands into this mouth, and that if a person took a false oath, his hand would have been bitten off. (Kotzebue's Travels in Italy).

Many other marvellous things were accomplished by Virgilius during his life; but the story of his death is the most singular and interesting part of the romance. As he advanced in life, Virgilius entertained the design of renovating his youth by force of magic. With this view he constructed a castle without the city, and at the gate of this building he placed twenty-four images, armed with flails, which they incessantly struck, so that no one could approach the entrance unless Virgilius himself arrested their mechanical motion. To this castle the magician secretly repaired, accompanied only by a favourite disciple, whom on their arrival he led into the cellar, and showed him a barrel, and a fair lamp at all seasons burning. He then directed his confidant to slay and hew him into small bits, to cut his head into four, to salt the whole, laying the pieces in a certain position in the barrel, and to place the barrel under the lamp: all which being performed, Virgilius asserted that in nine days he would be revived and made young again. The disciple was sorely perplexed by this strange proposal. At last,

however, he obeyed the injunctions of his master, and Virgilius was pickled and barrelled up according to the very unusual process which he had directed. Some days after, the emperor missing Virgilius at court, inquired concerning him at the confidant, whom he forced, by threats of death, to carry him to the enchanted castle, and to allow his entrance by stopping the motion of the statues which wielded the flails. After a long search the emperor descended to the cellar, where he found the remains of Virgilius in the barrel; and immediately judging that the disciple had murdered his master, he slew him on the spot. And when this was done, a naked child run three times round the barrel, saying, "Cursed be the time that ye came ever here;" and with these words the embryo of the renovated Virgil vanished.

That series of romances in which the heroes and sages of antiquity are represented as knights errant and sorcerers, forms the last class of tales of chivalry. I had at one time expected to have found a fifth class, relating to the crusades; and surely no subject could have been chosen more adapted to romance than the struggle between Saladin and Richard, both unparalleled in feats of prowess,—the one exhibiting the Saracen character in its highest perfection, and the other that superhuman courage and boundless generosity which constitute the mirror of knighthood. Nothing, however, can be worse founded than the assertion of Warburton and Warton, that after the Holy Wars a new set of champions, conquests, and countries were introduced into romance; and that Solyman, Nouraddin, with the cities of Palestine and Egypt, became the favourite topics. Mr Ritson has justly remarked, that no such change took place as is pretended; and so far from the Crusades and Holy Land becoming favourite topics, there is not, with the exception of the uninteresting romance of Godfrey of Boulogne, a single tale of chivalry founded on any of these subjects. Perhaps those celebrated expeditions undertaken for the recovery of the Holy Land were too recent, and too much matter of real life, to admit the decorations of fiction. Many of the metrical romances were written in England during the reign of Richard, or in France in the age of St Louis, and were transformed



into prose, as we learn from the authors themselves, at the moment when Edward I. embarked for Palestine.

Having therefore now completed the task of furnishing an analysis of the most important prose romances of chivalry that have been given to the world, I shall dismiss the subject by a few remarks on the influence and the decline of that species of composition.

The influence which chivalry for many ages exercised in the modification of manners and customs has been often pointed out, and whatever that effect may have been, it was doubtless heightened by the composition and perusal of romances.

These works arose from a system of manners, and in their turn exercised on manners a reciprocal influence. The taste of the age gradually changed from a fondness for monkish miracles to the ready admission of tales, equally eccentric, indeed, and improbable, but not so debasing. The charms of romance roused the dormant powers of the human intellect; gave wings to fancy and warmth to imagination; and, in some degree, kindled a love of glory. They seem also to have inspired a taste for reading; for that these works were much perused, is evident, both from the number that were written, and the many editions that have successively appeared.

Another effect produced by the romances of chivalry, was the communication of beauty and interest to the writings of many illustrious poets, who improved on their machinery, and adopted those tales of wondrous achievement in which the *amantes mira Camoenae* chiefly rejoice. Classical fictions might, like the Grecian architecture, be more elegant than the Gothic, but the productions of the middle ages were more awakening to the fancy and more affecting to the heart. The perilous adventures of the Gothic knights—their high honour, tender gallantry, and solemn superstitions, presented finer scenes and subjects of description, and more interesting displays of affection,—in short, more beauty, variety, and pathos, than had ever yet been unfolded.

Pulci and Boiardo, the earliest romantic poets of Italy, communicated to the tales of chivalry all the embellishments which flow from the charms of versification, and the beauties of an enchanting language. From

their example, the fables of romantic fiction became the favourite themes of succeeding poets. The compositions adorned by these splendid miracles were the objects of universal admiration, while the epic poems of Trissino and Alamanni, founded on the classic model, were neglected or despised. Nor can this be wholly attributed to the difference of genius in the poets themselves; for while the other writings of Ariosto sunk into oblivion, his Orlando, according to the expression of his great rival, lives in ever-renovating youth. The genius of Tasso, which hardly rises above mediocrity in tragedy, in pastoral, or in the classical refabrication of the Jerusalem, has reared one of the finest poems in the world on the basis of romantic fiction. "These were the tales," says the biographer of our earliest English poet, "with which the youthful fancy of Chaucer was fed; these were the visionary scenes by which his genius was awakened; these were the acts and personages on which his boyish thoughts were at liberty to ruminate for ever." Many too were the obligations of Spenser to the fables of romance: and even in a later period they nourished the genius of a poet yet more august, who repeatedly bears his testimony of admiration and gratitude to their inspiring influence.—"I will tell you," says Milton, "whither my younger feet wandered: I betook me among those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood."

A change introduced in the customs and mode of life among the inhabitants of Europe, as it was the principal source of the rise, so it may be also regarded as the chief cause of the decline, of romantic composition. The abolition of chivalry was the innovation which had most effect in this overthrow. However useful that institution might have been in the early stages of society, it was found that in a regular campaign the utmost disorder resulted from an impetuous militia, which knew no laws but those of its courage, which confounded temerity with valour, and was incapable of rallying in the hour of disaster. Vigour of discipline was broken by want of unity of command; for the army was headed by chiefs who had different interests and different motives of action, and who drew not from the same source their claims to obedience. The



knights, too, had at all times perverted the purposes of their institution. If we believe the flattering picture given by Colombiere, the errant heroes of chivalry wandered through the world redressing injuries, exterminating the banditti with which Europe was infested, or relieving those ladies who had fallen into the power of enemies. But if we examine other writers, we shall meet with a very different account of these worthies, and shall find, according to the quaint expression of an old English author, that these errant knights were arrant knaves.

Pierre de Blois, who wrote in the 12th century, complains that the horses of the knights were more frequently loaded with implements of gluttony and drunkenness, than with arms fit for battle. "They are burdened," says he, "not with weapons, but wine; not with javelins, but cheeses; not with bludgeons, but bottles; not with spears, but with spits."—*Non ferro sed vino, non lanceis sed caseis, non ensibus sed utribus, non hastibus sed verubus onerantur.* In France, during the disorders which existed in the reign of Charles VI., the contending factions, with a view to strengthen their interest, multiplied the number of knights, by which means the order was degraded. A new institution was created by Charles VII., who bestowed on his Gensdarmes the honours hitherto appropriated to knighthood, and the chivalry of France became anxious to enroll themselves amongst a body wherein they might arrive at military command, which, as simple knights, they could no longer attain. The image and amusements of chivalry now alone remained. Mankind were occasionally reminded of a previous state of society by the exhibition of jousts and tournaments; but even these, in a short while, became unfashionable in France, from the introduction of other amusements, and the accident which terminated the life of one of its monarchs.

The wonders of chivalry had disappeared from real life, but still lingered in the memory of man: new romantic compositions, indeed, no longer were written, but the old ones were still read with avidity, when all the powers of wit and genius were exerted—not, indeed, to ridicule the spirit of chivalry, or a state of society which had passed away, but to satirize

the barbarous relaters of chimerical adventures, and those who devoted their time to their perusal.

Some writers have considered the *Sir Thopas* of Chaucer as a prelude to the work of Cervantes. It may be much to the honour of the English poet that he so early discerned and ridiculed the absurdities of his contemporary romancers, but it cannot be conceived that *Sir Thopas* had any effect in discrediting their compositions. It appeared in a reign which almost realised the wonders of romantic fiction, and at a period when the spirit of chivalry possessed too firm hold of the mind to suffer the love of the marvellous to be easily eradicated. The satire, besides, was infinitely too recondite to have been detected in that age; what was meant as burlesque was probably considered as a grave heroic narrative,—a supposition which must have been strengthened from the author having, in another composition, adopted the extravagances which he is supposed to deride. In *Don Quixote*, on the contrary, the satire was too broad to be mistaken, and appeared when the spirit of chivalry was nearly abated. The old romancers had outraged all verisimilitude in their extravagant pictures of chivalry, and as their successors found that the taste of the public was beginning to pall, they sought to give an interest to their compositions by descriptions of more impossible valour and more incredible absurdity. Accordingly the evil began to cure itself, and the phantoms of knight-errantry were laughed out of countenance by the ridicule of Cervantes before their substance had been presented, at least in a prose composition, by any author of genius.

I do not believe that the prevalence of the heroic, or pastoral romances, had much effect in discrediting the tales of chivalry: these new fictions rather arose in consequence of a decline of the taste for the old works, and the stagnation of amusement which followed; but it is probable they were, in some measure, overshadowed by the growth of other branches of literature. The study of the classics introduced method into composition, and the ambition of rivalling these new patterns of excellence produced imitation. Fancy was curbed by reflection, and rules of criticism intimidated the bold eccentricities of romantic



genius. Besides, the Gothic fables were superseded by the general diffusion of the works of the Italian novelists in France and England, and the numerous translations and imitations of them in both countries. The alternate pictures of ingenious gallantry and savage revenge, which these exhibit, produced a taste

in reading, which, when once formed, could not easily have been recalled to a relish for the delights of romance. These tales form an extensive and interesting department of fiction, and their origin and progress will be the subject of our first inquiries in the succeeding chapters.

## CHAPTER VII.

Origin of Italian Tales—Fables of Bidpai—Seven Wise Masters—Gesta Romanorum—Contes et Fabliaux—Cento Novelle Antiche—Decameron of Boccaccio.

It seems not a little remarkable that Italy, which produced the earliest and finest specimens of romantic poetry, should scarcely have furnished a single prose romance of chivalry. This is the more remarkable, as the Italians seem to have been soon and intimately acquainted with the works of the latter description produced among the neighbouring nations. Nor does this knowledge appear merely from the poems of Pulci and Boiardo, but from authors during a period still more remote, in whom we meet with innumerable allusions to incidents related in the tales of chivalry. Dante represents the perusal of the story of Lancelot, as conducting Paolo and Francesca *al doloroso passo* (Inf. c. 5), and elsewhere shows his acquaintance with the fabulous stories of Arthur and Charlemagne (Inf. c. 31 and 32, Parad. c. 16 and 18). Petrarch also appears to have been familiar with the exploits of Tristan and Lancelot (Trionfi, &c.). In the Cento Novelle Antiche there exists the story of King Meliadus and the Knight without Fear; as also of the Lady of Scalot, who died for love of Lancelot du Lac. There, too, the passion of Yseult and the phrensy of Tristan are recorded; and in the sixth tale of the tenth day of the Decameron, we are told that a Florentine gentleman had two daughters, one of whom was called Gineura the Handsome, and the other Yseult the Fair.

Nevertheless the Italians have produced no original prose work of any length or reputation in the romantic style of composition. This deficiency may be partly attributed to

national manners and circumstances. Since the transference of the seat of the Roman empire to Constantinople, the Italians had never been conquerors, but had always been vanquished by barbarous nations, who were successively softened and polished at the same time that they became enervated. The inhabitants possessed neither that extravagant courage nor refined gallantry, the delineation of which forms the soul of romantic composition. At a time when, in other countries, national exploits, and the progress of feudal institutions, were laying the foundation for this species of fiction, Italy was over-run by the incursions of enemies, or only successfully defended by strangers. Hence it was difficult to choose any set of heroes, by the celebration of whose deeds the whole nation would have been interested or flattered, as England must have been by the relation of the achievements of Arthur, or France by the history of Charlemagne. The fame of Belisarius was indeed illustrious, but as an enemy he was hated by the descendants of the northern invaders; and, as a foreigner, his deeds could not gratify the national vanity of those he came to succour. His successor's exploits were liable to the same objections, and were besides performed by a being of all others the worst calculated to become a hero in a romance of chivalry.

The early division, too, of Italy into a number of small and independent states, was a check on national pride. A theme could hardly have been chosen which would have met with general applause, and the ex-



ploits of the chiefs of one district would often have been a mortifying tale to the inhabitants of another.

Besides, the mercantile habits so early introduced into Italy repressed a romantic spirit. It is evident from the Italian novelists, that the manners of the people had not caught one spark of the fire of chivalry, which kindled the surrounding nations. In the principal states of Italy, particularly Florence, the military profession was rather accounted degrading than honourable, during an age when, in every other country of Europe, the deference paid to personal strength and valour was at the highest. The Italian republics, indeed, were not destitute of political firmness, but their martial spirit had forsaken them, and their liberties were confided to the protection of mercenary bands.

Add to this, that at the time when France and England were principally engaged with compositions of chivalry, and when all the literary talent in these countries was exerted in that department, the attention paid in Italy to classical literature introduced a correctness of taste and fondness for regularity, which was hostile to the wildness and extravagance of the tales of chivalry.

At the same period, the three most distinguished and earliest geniuses of Italy were employed in giving stability to modes of composition at total variance with the romantic. Those who were accustomed to regard the writings of Dante and Petrarch as standards of excellence, would not readily have bestowed their approbation on *Tristan*, or the *Sons of Aymon*. But the *Decameron* of Boccaccio was probably the work which, in this respect, had the strongest influence. The tales it comprehends were extremely popular; they gave rise to early and numerous imitations, and were of a nature the best calculated to check the current of romantic ideas.

Since then, in the regions of Italian fiction, we shall no longer meet with fabulous histories, resembling those of which such numerous specimens have already been presented, it will now be proper to give some account of the endless variety of tales, or *Novelettes*, which were coeval with the appearance of romances of chivalry in France and England, and which

form so popular and so extensive a branch of Italian literature.

It may be interesting, in the first place, to trace the origin of this species of composition, in the tales which preceded the *Decameron* of Boccaccio. These were adapted to the amusement of infant society, but are interesting in some degree, as unfolding the manners of the age, and exhibiting the rude materials of more perfect composition.

Before mankind comprehend the subtilties of reasoning, or turn on themselves the powers of reflection, they are entertained, and may be instructed, by the relation of incidents imaginary or real. Hence, in almost every country, tales have been the amusement and learning of its rude and early ages.

Of the variety of tales which are to be found in the works of the Italian novelists, some were undoubtedly deduced from the writings of the Greek romancers and sophists. In the *Habrocomas* and *Anthia* of Xenophon Ephesius, we find the rudiments of the celebrated tale of *Luigi da Porto*, from which Shakspeare took his *Romeo and Juliet*, and many of the apologues in *Josaphat* and *Barlaam* correspond with chapters in the *Gesta Romanorum*, and through that performance with stories in the *Decameron*. The epistles of *Aristenetes* contain several tales very much in the spirit of those of Boccaccio. Thus, a lady, while engaged with a gallant, suddenly hears her husband approaching; she instantly ties the hands of her lover, and delivers him thus bound to her spouse as a thief she had just seized. The husband proposes putting him to death, to which the lady objects, suggesting that it will be better to detain him till day-break, and then deliver him into the hands of the magistrate, offering at the same time to watch him during night. By this means, while her husband is asleep, she enjoys a little more of the society of her lover, and permits him to escape towards morning. In the *Ass of Apuleius*, resemblances may be traced still more numerous and complete. But though it be true that these works had an influence on the tales which appeared in Europe at the first dawn of literature, the ultimate origin of this species of composition must unquestionably be referred to a source more ancient and oriental.



The earliest work of this nature that can be mentioned, is the tales or fables attributed to Bidpai, or Pilpay, a composition otherwise known by the name of

#### KALILAH U DAMNAH.

This production, which, in its original form, is supposed to be upwards of two thousand years old, was first written in an Indian language, in which the work was called Heetopades (wholesome instruction), and the sage who related the stories, Veshnoo Sarma. It is said to have been long preserved with great care and secrecy by an Indian monarch, among his choicest treasures. At length, however (as we are informed by Simeon Seth, in the preface to his Greek version of these stories), Chosroes, a Persian king, who reigned about the end of the 6th century, sent a learned physician into India, on purpose to obtain the Heetopades. This emissary accomplished the object of the mission, by bribing an Indian sage with a promise of intoxication, to steal the literary treasure. The physician, on his return to Persia, translated it into the language of his own country, and in the frame in which it was introduced, attributed the relation of the stories to Bidpai. It was soon after translated into Syriac, and oftener than once into more modern Persic. In the 8th century there appeared an Arabic version, under the title, Kalilah u Damnah, the appellation by which the work is now generally known, and which is derived from the names assigned to two foxes, who relate a number of the stories; the one term signifying worthy to be crowned, and the other ambitious. About the year 1100, Simeon Seth, by desire of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus, translated the Arabic version into Greek, under the title, *Τὰ κατὰ στεφανίτην, καὶ ἰχνηκατὴν*, of the crowned and the envious. The philosopher who relates the stories is not named in this version. It is divided into fifteen sections, in the two first of which the foxes are the principal interlocutors, but the remaining thirteen refer to other animals. The work of Simeon Seth was printed at Berlin, 1697, with a Latin version. Long before that period, however, the Kalilah u Damnah had been translated into Latin by John of Capua, who lived as far

back as the 13th century. This version was made from one in Hebrew, by Rabbi Joel, and was printed toward the end of the 15th century, under the title, *Directorium Humanæ Vitæ, vel Parabole Antiquorum Sapientum*. Thence it passed into German, Spanish, and Italian. The Italian translation was the work of the novelist Firenzuola, and was called *Discorsi Degli Animalì*, and published 1548. A version in the same tongue, by Doni, was translated into English, under the name of the Moral Philosophy of Doni, out of Italian, by Sir Thomas North, 4to, 1570 and 1601. From the Latin of John of Capua, there also appeared a French edition in 1698. It was from a Turkish model, however, written in the time of Solyman the Magnificent, that the well-known French work, *Contes et Fables Indiennes de Bidpai et Lockman*, 1724, was commenced by M. Galland, and continued by M. de Cardonne. If we may judge, however, from the title, it was not completed according to the intention of the authors, as there are no fables given which are attributed to Lockman. This work was translated into English, 1747.

In all the versions the tales are enclosed in a frame, a mode of composition subsequently adopted in many writings of a similar description. We are told that a powerful king, after being tired one day with the chase, came, accompanied by his vizier, to a place of retreat and refreshment. Here the prince and his minister enter into a discourse on human life and government, a conversation which seems to have been suggested by a swarm of bees, which were at labour in the trunk of a neighbouring oak. During this discussion, the vizier mentions the story of Bidpai, and the Indian king who ruled according to his counsels. This frame is not believed to be more ancient than the Turkish version; but the story of Bidpai, which the king expresses a curiosity to hear, is supposed to be as old as the earliest Persian translation, and is of the following tenor:—Dabchelim, the Indian king, after a feast in which his liberality had been much commended by all his guests, made a great distribution of gold among his friends and the poor. In the course of the following night, an old man appeared to him in a dream, and, as a reward of his gene-



rosity, informed him where he would find a treasure. Next morning the king proceeded to the spot to which he had been directed. There he found a cavern inhabited by a hermit, who put him in possession of an immense treasure he had inherited from his father, but for which he had no farther use. Among other articles, the king received a precious casket, containing a piece of silk, woven with certain characters, which, however, had the inconvenience of being unintelligible. When at length interpreted by a philosopher, it was found to be a legacy from a prophetic predecessor of Dabchelim, and to contain fourteen pieces of instruction for monarchs. Each of these is declared to have reference to a surprising history, but it is announced, that he who is desirous to hear must repair to the isle of Sarandib (Ceylon). The king being disposed to undertake this journey, and the viziers being against it, a discussion arises, in which all attempt to support their own sentiments, by the relation of fables. His majesty at length, as was to be expected, followed his own opinion, and, after a long journey, arrived at the island of Sarandib. While traversing a lofty, but delightful mountain, he came to a grotto which was inhabited by the Bramin Bidpai. This was the sage destined to expound the mysterious precepts which the king now recited to him, and which teach that a monarch is apt to be imposed on by detractors, that he ought to be careful not to lose a faithful friend, &c. These maxims the sage illustrates by fables and apologues, which, it may be remarked, have seldom much relation to the instructions of which Dabchelim required an explanation.—Stories are heaped on stories, and sphered within each other: a dying father, for example, gives some admonitions to his sons, which he enforces by apologues: but his family seeing matters in a different point of view, support their opinions in the same manner, and introduce the two foxes, who rehearse a long series of fables.

It is unnecessary to give any specimen of the tales of Bidpai, as they have been so much altered in the various transformations they have undergone, that no dependence could be had on their originality. But it must have been through the medium of the version of John of Capua, that these oriental fables

exercised their influence on European fiction. Some of these stories agree with the Clericalis Disciplina of Petrus Alphonsus, and many of them have been adopted into the Gesta Romanorum, a great storehouse of the Italian novelists. The tale of the thief who breaks his neck by catching at a ray of the moon, occurs in the Gesta and the French Fabliaux. But I remember only one Italian novel, the incidents of which have been derived from this work, and it is but in a very few stories of the Kalilah u Damnah, that any resemblance can be traced. They are mostly fables in the style of Æsop, and have but few traces of the ingenious gallantry, savage atrocity, or lively repartee, which are the characteristics of Italian tales. Besides, as the work was not very widely diffused, nor generally known in Europe in the 13th or 14th centuries, I cannot believe that it had much effect, either directly or indirectly on this species of composition.

The collection of tales, familiarly known in this country under name of the

#### SEVEN WISE MASTERS,

is certainly one of those works which may be considered as having had considerable influence on the writings of the Italian novelists, and may perhaps be regarded as the remotest origin of the materials they have employed.

Of this romance the prototype is believed to have been the book of the Seven Counsellors, or Parables of Sandabar. This Sandabar is said, by an Arabian writer, to have been an Indian philosopher, who lived about an hundred years before the Christian era; but it has been disputed whether he was the author, or only the chief character, of the work, which was inscribed with his name. He might have been both a character and an author, but it would appear from a note in a Hebrew imitation, preserved in the British Museum, that he was at all events a principal character; "Sandabar iste erat princeps sapientum Brachmanorum Indiae, et magnam habet partem in tota hac historia." This Hebrew version is the oldest form in which the work is now extant. It was translated into that language, as we are informed in a Latin note on the



manuscript, by Rabbi Joel, from the original Indian, through the medium of the Arabic or Persian.<sup>1</sup>

In point of antiquity, the second version of the parables, is that which appeared in Greek, under the title of Syntipas, of which many MSS. are still extant. Some of these profess to be translated from the Persian, and others from the Syriac language, so that the real original of the Greek translation cannot be precisely ascertained.

The next appearance was in Latin, a work which is only known through the French metrical version of it, entitled *Dolopatos*. This was the first modern shape it assumed, after having passed through all the ancient languages. *Dolopatos* was brought to light by Fauchet, who, in his account of the early French poets, ascribes it to Hebers, or Herbers, an ecclesiastic who lived during the reign of Lewis IX., as he informs us that it was written for the instruction of that monarch's son, Philip, afterwards called Philip the Hardy. Of this version there is a MS. copy in the national library at Paris.

In the same library there is preserved another French MS., by an anonymous author, which was written soon after that of Hebers, but differs from it essentially, both in the frame and in the stories introduced. This work gave rise to many subsequent imitations in French prose, and to the English metrical romance, entitled the *Process of the Seven Sages*, which is preserved among the MSS. of the Cotton library, and of which an account has been given by Mr Ellis, who supposes it to have been written about the year 1330.

Not long after the invention of printing, the Latin *Historia Septem Sapientum*, a different version from that on which the *Dolopatos* of Hebers is founded, was printed at Cologne, and translations of it soon appeared in almost all the languages of Europe. It was published in English prose, under the title of the *Seven Wise Masters*, about the middle of the 16th century, and in Scotch metre by John Rolland, of Dalkeith, about the same period.

The last European translation belongs to the Italians, and was first printed at Mantua, in 1546, under the title of *Erastus*. It is very

different from the Greek original, and was translated, with the alterations it had received, into French, under the title *Histoire Pitoyable du Prince Erastus*, 1565, and the *History of Prince Erastus*, &c., was also printed in English in 1674.

This romance, through most of its transmigrations, exhibits the story of a king who places his son under the charge of one or more philosophers. After the period of tuition is completed, the wise men, when about to reconduct their pupil to his father, discover by their skill, that his life will be endangered unless he preserve a strict silence for a certain time. The prince being cautioned on this subject, the monarch is enraged at the obstinate taciturnity of his son. At length one of his queens undertakes to discover the cause of this silence, but, during an interview with the prince, seizes the opportunity of attempting to seduce him to her embraces. Forgetting the injunctions of his preceptors, the youth reproaches her for her conduct, but then becomes mute as before. She, in revenge, accuses him to her husband, of the offence of which she had herself been guilty. The king resolves on the execution of his son, but the philosophers endeavour to dissuade him from this rash act, by each relating one or more stories, illustrative of the risks of inconsiderate punishment, which are answered by an equal number on the part of her majesty.

Such is the outline of the frame, but the stories are often different in the versions. Indeed, there is but one tale in the modern *Erastus*, which occurs in the Greek *Syntipas*. The characters, too, in the frames are always different; thus, in the Greek version, Cyrus is the king, and *Syntipas* the tutor. In *Dolopatos*, a Sicilian monarch of that name is the king; the young prince is called *Lucinien*, and *Virgil* is the philosopher to whose care he is entrusted. *Vespasian*, son of *Mathusalem*, is the emperor in the coeval French version, and the wise men are *Cato*, *Jesse*, *Lentulus*, &c. The author of the English metrical romance has substituted *Diocletian* as the emperor, and *Florentin* as the son. *Diocletian* is preserved in the Italian copies, but the prince's name is changed into *Erastus*. In some of the eastern versions, the days, in place of seven, have been multiplied into

<sup>1</sup> Ellis's *Early Metrical Romances*, vol. iii.



forty ; and in this form the story of the Wise Masters became the origin of the Turkish tales, published in France, under the title of *L'Histoire de la Sultane de Perse et des quarante Visirs*.

Few works are more interesting and curious than the Seven Wise Masters, in illustrating the genealogy of fiction, or its rapid and almost unaccountable transition from one country to another. The leading incident of a disappointed woman, accusing the object of her passion of attempting the crime she had herself meditated, is as old as the story of Joseph, and may thence be traced through the fables of mythology to the Italian novelists. In the Arabian Nights Entertainments, the Husband and Peacock is the same with the Magpie of the Wise Masters. The story of the Father murdered by his son was originally told by Herodotus, of the Architect and his son who broke into the treasury of the King of Egypt, and has been imitated in many Italian tales. The Widow who was comforted, is the Ephesian matron of Petronius Arbiter, and the Two Dreams corresponds exactly with the plot of the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus, the *Fabliau Le Chevalier a la Trappe* (Le Grand, 3, 157), a tale in the fourth part of Massuccio ; and the story *Du Vieux Calender* in Gueulette's *Contes Tartares*. Finally, the Knight and his Greyhound resembles the celebrated Welsh tradition concerning Llewellyn the Great and his greyhound Gellert : the only difference is, that in the former production the dog preserves his master's child by killing a serpent, while, according to the Welsh tradition, it is a wolf he destroys. In both, the parents seeing the faithful animal covered with blood, believe that he has torn the child to pieces, and sacrifice him to their resentment.

Next to the Seven Wise Masters may be mentioned the tales of Petrus Alphonsus, a converted Jew, who was godson to Alphonsus I., King of Arragon, and was baptized in the beginning of the 12th century. These stories are professedly borrowed from Arabian fabulists. They are upwards of thirty in number, and consist of examples intended to illustrate the admonitions of a father to a son. The work was written in Latin, and was entitled *Alphonsus de Cleri-*

*cali Disciplina*. But the Latin copy only supplies twenty-six stories. The remainder are to be found in two metrical French versions, one entitled "*Proverbes de Peres Anforse* ;" and the other "*Le Romaunz de Peres Aunfour, comment l'aprist et chastia son fils belement*."

A few of these stories are precisely in the style of gallantry, painted by the Italian novelists. Thus the eighth tale is that of a vine-dresser, who wounds one of his eyes while working in his vineyard. Meanwhile his wife was occupied with her gallant. On the husband's return, she contrives her lover's escape by kissing her spouse on the other eye. Of this story, as we shall afterwards find, there is a close imitation in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, the 6th of the tales of the queen of Navarre, and the 23d of the first part of *Bandello*. The 9th story of Petrus Alphonsus is that of an artful old woman, who conceals her daughter's gallant from the husband, by spreading a sheet before his eyes, in such a manner as to give the lover an opportunity of escaping unseen : this is the 122d chapter of the *Gesta Romanorum*, and is also to be found in the *Fabliaux* published by Le Grand. Many other tales occur in Petrus Alphonsus, in which there is not merely a resemblance in manner, but in which the particular incidents, as shall be afterwards shown, are the same with those in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, and the *Decameron* of Boccaccio.

Perhaps neither the author of the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, nor the subsequent Italian novelists, derived stories directly from the Seven Wise Masters, or the tales of Alphonsus ; but these works suggested many things to the writers of the French *Fabliaux*, and a still greater number have been transferred into the

#### GESTA ROMANORUM,

which is believed to be a principal store-house of the Italian novelists.

This composition, in the disguise of romantic fiction, presents us with classical stories, Arabian apologues, and monkish legends.

Mr Douce has shown that there are two works entitled *Gesta Romanorum*, and which, strictly speaking, should be considered as



separate performances. The first and original *Gesta* was written in Latin, on the continent. It was not translated into English till 1703, but has been repeatedly printed, though no MS. of it has yet been brought to light.

The second work, in its earliest shape, is also in the Latin language, but was written in England, in imitation of the continental *Gesta* above mentioned. It was never published in its original form, but an English translation was printed by Wynkyn de Worde, and a subsequent edition appeared in 1595. There are extant, however, a number of MS. copies in Latin, which Mr Douce says led Warton to imagine that the two *Gestas* were the same, and to remark, that there is a great variation in the printed and MS. copies of the *Gesta Romanorum*.<sup>1</sup> The work written in England consists of 102 chapters, of which forty are of the same nature with the stories in the continental *Gesta*,—an inoculation of feudal manners and eastern imagery, on the exploits of classical heroes; but the remainder are somewhat different. The stories in the Anglican *Gesta* were well known to our early poets, who made much use of them. Among these tales we find the story of Lear, and the Jew in the Merchant of Venice. Some of them also correspond with the works of the Italian novelists: but the original *Gesta* is the one to which they were indebted, and which therefore at present is alone deserving of our attention.

This work is attributed by Warton to Petrus Berchorius, or Pierre Bercheur, who was prior of a Benedictine convent at Paris, and died in 1362. The composition of the *Gesta* has been assigned by Warton to this monk, on the authority of Salomon Glassius, a theologist of Saxe Gotha, who points him out as the author in his *Philologiae Sacrae*, and Warton attempts to fortify his assertion by the similarity of the style and execution of the *Gesta*, to works unquestionably written by Berchorius. Glassius, whose information is derived from Salmeron, says "*hoc in studio excelluit quidam Petrus Berchorius Picta-*

*viensis, ordinis D. Benedicti, qui peculiari libro Gesta Romanorum, nec non legendas Patrum, aliasque aniles Fabulas allegorice et mystice exposuit. Exempla adducit dicto loco Salmero*" (viz. T. 1 proleg. 16 car. 21). Glassius then quotes from Salmeron, the story of St Bernard and the Gambler, which corresponds with the 170th chapter of most editions of the *Gesta Romanorum*; so that we have at least the authority of Salmeron that Berchorius was the author. Mr Douce, however, is of opinion, that the *Gesta Romanorum* is not the production of Berchorius, but of a German, as a number of German names of dogs occur in one of the chapters, and many of the stories are extracted from German authors, as Cesarius, Albert of Stade, &c., which Mr Warton, on the other hand, supposes to have been interpolated by some German editor, or printer.

Whoever may have been the author of the *Gesta*, it is pretty well ascertained to have been written about the year 1340, and thus had time to become a fashionable work before 1358, the year in which Boccaccio is supposed to have completed his *Decameron*. The earliest edition, though without date, is known to have been prior to 1473. It consists of a hundred and fifty-two chapters, and is thus announced,—"*Incipiunt Historiae Notabiles, collectae ex Gestis Romanorum et quibusdam aliis libris, cum applicationibus eorundem.*" A subsequent edition, containing a hundred and eighty-one chapters, was published in 1475, and was followed by many translations, and about thirty Latin editions, most of which preserved the number of a hundred and eighty-one chapters. That printed in 1488 is the most approved.

The *Gesta*, as is well known, presents us with the manners of chivalry, with spiritual legends, and eastern apologues, in the garb of Roman story. It appears to have been compiled in the first place from Arabian fables, found in the tales of Alphonsus; and an old Latin translation of the *Kalilah u Damnah*, to which Alphonsus was indebted. Indeed,

<sup>1</sup> In fact, however, the two *Gestas* may just as well be considered the same work as the different versions of the *Wise Masters*, or of the *Kalilah u Damnah*. The term, *Gesta Romanorum*, implies nothing more than a collection of ancient stories,

many of which might be the same, but which would naturally vary in various countries, according to the taste of the collector, in the same manner as different stories are introduced in the Greek *Syntipas*, the Italian *Erastus*, and English *Wise Masters*.



not less than a third of the tales of Alphonsus have been transferred to the *Gesta Romanorum*. In the next place the author seems chiefly to have had recourse to obsolete Latin chronicles, which he embellished with legends of the saints, the apologues in the history of Josaphat and Barlaam, and the romantic inventions of his age. The latter classics also, as Valerius Maximus, Macrobius, &c., are frequently quoted as authorities. Sometimes, too, the author cites the *Gesta Romanorum*, the title of his own work, by which he is not understood to mean any preceding compilation of that name, but the Roman, or rather ancient history in general.

The contents of this collection are not such as might be expected, from its name or the authorities adduced. It comprehends a multitude of stories altogether fictitious, and which are total misrepresentations of Roman history: the incidents are described as happening to Roman knights or under the reign of Roman emperors, who, generally, never existed, and who seldom, even when real characters, had any connexion with the circumstances of the narrative. To each tale or chapter, a moral is added, in which some precept is deduced from the incidents, an example which has been followed by Boccaccio, and many of his imitators. The time in which the *Gesta* appeared was an age of mystery, and every thing was supposed to contain a double or secondary meaning. At length the history of former periods, and the fictions of the classics, were attempted to be explained in an allegorical manner. Acteon, torn to pieces by his own hounds, was a symbol of the persecution of our Saviour. This gave rise to compositions like the *Romaunt of the Rose*, which were professedly allegorical; and to the practice adopted by Tasso and other Italian poets, of apologising for the wildness of their romantic compositions, by pretending

to have accommodated them to certain remote analogies of morality and religion.<sup>1</sup>

Almost every tale in the *Gesta Romanorum* is of importance in illustrating the genealogy of fiction, and the incorporation of eastern fable and Gothic institutions with classical story. There are few of the chapters in which the heroes of antiquity, feudal manners, and oriental imagery have been more jumbled than in the first. Pompey has a daughter whose chamber is guarded by five armed knights and a dog. Being on one occasion allowed to attend a public spectacle, she is seduced by a duke, who is afterwards killed by a champion of Pompey's court. She is subsequently reconciled to her father, and betrothed to a nobleman. On this occasion she receives from Pompey an embroidered robe, and crown of gold—from the champion who had slain her seducer a gold ring—a similar present from the wise man who had pacified her father, and from her spouse a seal of gold. All these presents possessed singular virtues, and were inscribed with proverbial sentences, suitable to the circumstances of the princess.

The *Gesta Romanorum*, too, had a powerful influence on English poetry, and has afforded a variety of adventures not merely to Gower, and Lydgate, and Chaucer, but to their most recent successors. Parnell, in his *Hermit*, has only embellished the 80th chapter by poetical colouring, and a happier arrangement of incidents.

It is chiefly, however, as having furnished materials to the Italian novelists, that the *Gesta* has been here so particularly mentioned. In the 56th chapter we find the rudiments of those stories of savage revenge, of which there are some examples in Boccaccio, and which is carried to such extravagance by Cinthio, and subsequent Italian novelists. A merchant is magnificently entertained in a nobleman's castle. During supper the guest is placed next

<sup>1</sup> Luther, in a curious passage in his *Commentary* on Genesis (cap. 30), attributes the origin of this practice to the monks, and it would appear that it had been derived by them from the east. "In Turcia," says he, "multi religiosi sunt, qui id student ut Alcoranum Mahometi interpretentur allegorice, quo in majore estimatione sint. Est enim Allegoria tanquam *formosa meretrix*, quae ita blanditur hominibus, ut non possit non amari, praesertim ab hominibus

ociosis, qui sunt sine tentatione. Tales putant se in medio Paradisi et in gremio Dei esse, si quando illis speculationibus indulgent. Et primum quidem a stolidis et ociosis monachis ortae sunt, et tandem ita late serpserunt ut quidam *Metamorphosin* Ovidii in allegorias verterint; Mariam fecerunt Laurum, Apollinem Christum. Ego itaque odi allegorias. Si quis tamen volet iis uti, videat cum judicio cas tractet."



the hostess, and is much struck with her beauty. The table is covered with the richest dainties, served in golden dishes, while a pittance of meat is placed before the lady in a human skull. At night the merchant is conducted to a sumptuous chamber. When left alone, he observes a glimmering lamp in a corner of the room, by which he discovers two dead bodies hung up by the arms. In the morning he is informed by the nobleman, that the skull which had been placed before the lady, was that of a duke he had detected in her embraces, and whose head he had cut off with his own sword. As a memorial of her crime, and to teach his wife modest behaviour, her adulterer's skull had been converted into a trencher.<sup>1</sup> The corpses in the chamber, continued he, are those of my kinsmen, murdered by the sons of the duke. To keep up my sense of revenge for their blood, I visit their dead bodies daily. It is not explained, however, why this dismal apartment was assigned to the stranger. This story occurs in more than one of the romantic poems of Italy. It is also the plot of an old Italian tragedy, written by Ruccellai, and has been imitated by many subsequent writers,—in the 32d tale of the Queen of Navarre, in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, and in the German ballad of Count Stolberg. Such atrocious fictions, however, were not peculiar to the middle ages, but had their model in classic fable,—in the revenge of Progne, and the banquet of Atreus.

A few of the Italian tales are founded on, or embellished by, magical operations. The story of Sultan Saladin, one of the most beautiful in the *Decameron*, and also that of the magician who raises up a blooming garden in the depth of winter, are of this description. Now, a great proportion of the stories in the *Gesta Romanorum* are of this nature also. Thus chapter 102 contains the story of a knight who went to Palestine, and whose lady, meanwhile, engaged in an intrigue with a clerk. Her infidelity was discovered to her absent husband by an eastern magician, by means of a polished mirror. Stories of this sort were common both in romance and tradition. It is said that during the Earl of

Surrey's travels in Italy, Cornelius Agrippa showed him in a looking-glass his mistress Geraldine. She was represented as indisposed, and reclined on a couch, reading her lover's verses by the light of a waxen taper.<sup>2</sup> In Spenser's *Faery Queen*, Merlin is feigned to have been the artificer of an enchanted mirror, in which a damsel viewed the shadow of her lover.

There is also a magical story in chapter 107, entitled *De Imagine cum digito dicente, percute hic*. It is told that there was an image in the city of Rome, with its right hand stretched forth, on the middle finger of which was written, "Strike here." For a long time no one could understand the meaning of this mysterious inscription. At length a certain subtle clerk, who came to see this famous image, observed, while the sun shone against it at mid-day, the shadow of the inscribed finger on the ground at some distance. He immediately took a spade, began to dig on that spot, and at last reached a flight of steps, which descended far under ground, and led him to a stately palace. In a hall of this edifice he beheld a king and queen sitting at table, surrounded by their nobles and a multitude of people, all clothed in rich garments—but no person spoke. He looked towards one corner, where he saw an immense carbuncle, which illuminated the whole apartment. In the opposite corner he perceived the figure of a man with a bended bow, and an arrow in his hand, prepared to shoot; on his forehead was written, "I am who I am; nothing can escape my dart, not even yonder carbuncle which shines so bright." The clerk viewed all with amazement. Entering another chamber, he beheld the most beautiful women working at the loom: but all was silence. He then went into a stable full of the most excellent horses, richly caparisoned: but those he touched were instantly turned into stone. Next he surveyed all the apartments of the palace, which apparently abounded with every thing he could desire; but on returning to the hall he had first entered, he began to reflect how to retrace his steps. Then he very justly conjectured that his report of all these wonders

<sup>1</sup> Ma foi (says the queen of Navarre), si toutes celles a qui pareille chose est arrivée buvoient a de semblables vaisseaux, Je crains fort qu'il y auroit

bien des coupes de vermeil qui deviendroient tetes de morts.

<sup>2</sup> See Lay of the Last Minstrel, C. 6.



would hardly be believed unless he carried something back with him as evidence. He therefore took from the principal table a golden cup and a golden knife, and placed them in his bosom. On this the image, which stood in the corner with the bow and arrow, immediately shot at the carbuncle, which was shattered into a thousand pieces. At that moment the hall became black as night. In this darkness the clerk, not being able to find his way out, remained in the subterraneous palace, and soon suffered a miserable death. All this is, of course, moralized; the palace is the world—the figure with the bow is mortality—and the carbuncle human life. William of Malmesbury is the first writer by whom this story was recorded: he relates a similar tale of Pope Gerbert, or Sylvester the Second, who died in the year 1003, and was the earliest European student of Arabic learning.

In their obvious meaning, it is probable that these magical tales, which are evidently borrowed from the East, suggested to the Italian novelists the enchantments with which their works are occasionally embellished.

It must, however, be remarked, that the *Gesta Romanorum* supplies few of those tales of criminal yet ingenious gallantry which appear in all the Italian novelists, and occupy more than a third part of the *Decameron*. Indeed, I have observed but two stories of this description in the *Gesta*, chapters 121 and 122, both of which are taken from Petrus Alphonsus. (See above, p. 191.) The origin of tales of this nature must therefore chiefly be sought in the

#### CONTES ET FABLIAUX.

France, in a literary point of view, may be considered as divided into two parts during the 12th and 13th centuries.

Soon after Gaul had been subdued by the Romans, the vanquished nation almost universally adopted the language of the victors, as generally happens when conquerors are farther advanced in civilization than the people they have overcome. During many centuries Latin continued the sole or prevalent tongue, but on the inroads of the Franks and other tribes it became gradually corrupted. From these innovations two languages were formed, both of which were called *Romaine*, or Ro-

mance, from Latin still continuing the principal ingredient in their composition. About the 9th century these dialects began to supersede Latin as a colloquial tongue, in the different districts of France in which they were spoken. One species of Romance was used in those French provinces which lie to the south of the river Loire, and from the circumstance of the inhabitants of that country using the word *oc* as their affirmative, it was called *Langue d'oc*. The sister dialect, which was spoken to the north of the river Loire, received the name of *Lang' d'oïl*, from the term *oïl* being the affirmation of the northern provinces. It is from this latter idiom that the modern French language has been chiefly formed. The southern romance was something between French and Italian, or rather French and Spanish.

It is not my intention, nor indeed is it connected with my subject, to enter into the dispute concerning the dialect to which the French nation has been indebted for the earliest specimens of metrical composition, and whether the northern *Trouveurs*, or *Troubadours* of the south, are best entitled to be regarded as the fathers of its poetry. This question, which is involved in much obscurity, has never been very profoundly agitated, and its full discussion would require, from the innumerable MSS. that must be perused, a time and attention which few have inclination to bestow.

Versifiers, however, seem to have made an early appearance both in the northern and southern regions of France. A large proportion of the latter district was possessed by Raimond IV., Count of Provence. All his dominions, in consequence, received the name of Provence; the southern Romance, or *Langue d'oc*, was called the Provençal language, and the versifiers who composed in it the Provençal poets. They also distinguished themselves by the name of *Troubadours*, or *Inventors*, an appellation, corresponding to the title of poet, which was assigned to all those who wrote in Provençal rhyme, whether of the southern provinces of France, of the north of Italy, or Catalonia.

The Provençal poets, or *Troubadours*, have been acknowledged as the masters of the early Italian poets, and have been raised to perhaps



unmerited celebrity by the imposing panegyrics of Dante and Petrarch. The profession of the Troubadours existed with reputation from the middle of the 12th to the middle of the 14th century. Their compositions contain violent satires against the clergy, absurd didactic poems, moral songs versified from the works of Boethius, and insipid pastorals. But they were principally occupied with amorous compositions, and abstruse speculations on the nature of love. It was in the *Tensons*, or pleas before the celebrated tribunals in which amatory questions were agitated, that they chiefly attempted to signalize themselves. These *tensons* were dialogues in alternate couplets, in which they sustained their various speculative opinions.

In the works of the Troubadours, however, we can hardly trace any rudiments of those tales, either of horror or gallantry, which became so prevalent among the Italians. Millot's literary history of the Troubadours presents us with only two stories which have any resemblance to the Italian novels of gallantry. In one of these, by Raimond Vidal, we are told that a lord of Arragon, who was a jealous husband, pretended to take his departure on a journey, but suddenly returned, and introduced himself to his wife in disguise of the knight whom he suspected as her lover. The lady recognises her husband, but pretends to be deceived, and, after shutting him up, goes to find her lover; and, moved with indignation at the prying disposition of her lord, grants the knight what she had hitherto refused him. Next morning she assembles her servants to take vengeance, as she gives out, on a vassal who had made an attempt on her virtue; the husband is thus beat in the place of his confinement by his own domestics, but is at length recognised, and obtains pardon on vowing thenceforward unbounded confidence in his wife. The second story is by Arnould de Carcasses. A knight dispatches his parrot to a lady with a declaration of his passion: but though the fair one accepts the offer of his heart, the lover is much embarrassed to devise any mode of procuring an interview. The bird hits on an expedient, which is to set fire to her castle, in hopes that the lady might escape to her lover in the confusion which would result from the conflagration. This

project the parrot executes in person, by means of some wild-fire which he carries in his claws. As was expected, the lady elopes, proceeds straightway to the rendezvous, and ever after holds the winged incendiary in high estimation. Four other tales have been reckoned up by the historians of the Troubadours, but none of these can be properly regarded as tales, being merely intended as introductions to the discussion of some knotty love question, which generally forms the longest part of the composition.

It is then in the *Langue d'oïl*, or northern romance alone, that we must look for those ample materials which have enriched the works of the Italian novelists. This dialect, we have seen, superseded the Latin as a colloquial language in the beginning of the 9th century. Its uniformity was early destroyed by the Norman invasion, which occasioned the division of the *romance* into a number of different idioms. To the conquerors, however, from whom it suffered corruption, it was also indebted for restoration. These invaders had no sooner fairly settled in their acquired territories, than they cultivated, with the utmost care, the language of the vanquished. Under their government it found an asylum, and was by them diffused in its purity through all the northern provinces of France.

Latin, however, long continued the language of the schools, the monasteries, and judicial proceedings; and it was not till the middle of the 11th century that the *Romance* came to be used in written compositions. It was originally employed in metrical productions: lives of the saints, with devotional and moral treatises in rhyme, are the first specimens of this tongue; of the minor compositions, the earliest seem to have been military songs, of which the most celebrated was the *Chanson de Rolland*, the subject of so much controversy. There were also a few satirical and encomiastic songs, and during the 12th century a good number of an amatory description, filled with tiresome gallantry, whining supplications, and perpetual complaints against evil speakers. We likewise find a few *Jeux parties*, which were questions of amorous jurisprudence, corresponding to the *tensons* of the Troubadours, as whether one would prefer seeing his mistress dead or married to



another. Such questions being often decided by the poet contrary to the opinion of his audience, were referred to the Court of Love, a tribunal which certainly existed in the north of France, though it never acquired the same celebrity as in the southern provinces.

It is believed, however, that no professed work of fiction appeared in the Romance language previous to the middle of the 12th century. I shall not here resume what has been formerly said on the origin of romances of chivalry, of which, it has already been shown, we must seek for the first rudiments in the *Langue d'oïl*, as spoken in the north of France and in the court of England. Nor shall I enter into the dispute whether the earliest work of fiction was in the form of a metrical romance, or of those celebrated tales known by the name of *Fabliaux*.

These stories are almost the exclusive property of the provinces which lie north from the Loire; they are the chief boast of the literature of France during this remote period, and are well deserving of attention, whether we consider their intrinsic merit, or their general influence on fiction.

Of these tales, some have been called *Lais*, and others *Fabliaux*; terms which are often used so indiscriminately, that it is not easy to give any definition to distinguish them. The *Lai* appears, in general, to have been the recital of an action, with more or less intrigue, but, according to Le Grand, differed from the *Fabliau* by being interspersed with musical interludes. Mr Ellis suspects that what were called lays, were translations from the Breton dialect, *Laoi* being a Welsh and Armorican word. Others have supposed that lays were always of a melancholy nature. This is denied by Mr Tyrwhitt, who defines the lay, I think pretty accurately, to be a light narrative poem of moderate length, simple style, and easy measure, neither extended in incidents, as the romance, nor ludicrous, as is usually the case in *Fabliaux*. In the old translation of *Lai le Fraine*, the author of which must have been better informed than any modern writer, it is said that lays were originally from Britany, but that they were composed on all subjects:—

Some beth of war, and some of woe,  
And some of joy and mirth also,

And some of treachery and of guile,  
Of old adventures that fell while,  
And some of bourdes and ribauldry,  
And many there beth of Faery;  
Of all things that men seth,  
Most of love, forsooth, there beth:  
In Bretanie, of old time,  
These lays were wrought, so seth this rhyme.

With the exception of Aucassin and Nicolette, which consists of prose and verse intermingled, the *Fabliaux* are all metrical, and are, for the most part, in couplets of eight syllables.

These compositions were written by persons styling themselves *Trouveurs*, a term expressive of genius and invention, corresponding to the Poet of Greece, and the Troubadour of the south of France. The period of the appearance of their works extends through the last half of the 12th, the whole of the 13th, and part of the 14th century, but the greatest number were written during the reign of St Louis. Thus the æra of the composition of the *Gesta Romanorum* is subsequent to that of a large proportion of the *Fabliaux*. It is not likely, however, that the *Trouveurs*, or authors of the *Gesta*, copied from each other; they more probably borrowed from the same sources of fable. Like the stories in the *Gesta*, a great number of the *Fabliaux* seem to have been of eastern origin. Many of them are evidently taken from Petrus Alphonsus, who was merely a collector of Arabian tales of instruction; and others are apparently derived from the same nation, as they correspond with stories in the *Arabian Nights*, and with the *Bahar Danush*, or *Garden of Knowledge*, a work which, though of recent compilation, is founded on the most ancient Brahmin traditions, which had gradually spread through Persia and Arabia. For a long period a constant devotional, as well as commercial, intercourse had subsisted between Europe and the Saracen dominions. In Christendom, indeed, the Mahometans were ever detested, but it was not always the same in Asia. During intervals of peace in time of the crusades, the enemies were frequently united by alliances, the celebration of festivals, and all the appearances of cordial friendship. The tales which were of such antiquity in the East, and were there held in so high estimation, were eagerly seized by the *Trouveurs* who had wandered to the



Holy Land, and were communicated to those who remained behind by report of the Jews, or the hordes who had visited Palestine as pilgrims or soldiers. Even in his own country the Trouveur passed an idle and a wandering life. He was freely admitted to the castle of the baron, yet associated with the lowest *Vil-lains*. Hence he was placed in circumstances of all others most favourable for collecting the anecdotes and scandal of the day. These he combined, arranged, and embellished according to his own fancy, and dressed up in the form which he supposed would be most acceptable to his audience. At this period the nobility lived retired in their own fortresses, and only met at certain times, and on solemn festivals: on these occasions part of the amusement of the company had been to listen to the recital of metrical romances. But these poems being generally too long to be heard out at once, the Fabliaux, which were short and lively, were substituted in their room, and were frequently recited by the itinerant Trouveurs, as we learn from one of their number, in return for the lodging and entertainment they received:—

Usage est en Normandie,  
Que qui herbegiez est, qu' il die  
Fable ou chanson a l' hoste.

*Sacristain de Cluni.*

The Trouveur, or Fabler, also frequently wrote his metrical productions with the intention that they should be chaunted or declaimed. As the imperfection of measure required the assistance of song, and even of musical instruments, the minstrel, or *histrion*, added the charms of music to the compositions of the Trouveur. The aids of gesture and pantomime, too, were thought necessary to relieve the monotony of recitation; hence the jongleur, or juggler, a kind of vaulter and buffoon, associated himself with the Trouveur and minstrel, and performing many marvellous feats of dexterity, accompanied them in their wandering from castle to castle for the entertainment of the barons. At length, however, the professions of Trouveur and minstrel became, in a great measure, blended, as the minstrel, by degrees, formed new combinations from the materials in his possession, and at last produced fictions of his own.

“ This,” says Mr Ellis, “ was the most splendid æra of the history of the minstrels, and comprehends the end of the 12th and the whole of the 13th century.”

The works of the Trouveurs and minstrels, however popular at the time, and however much they contributed to the entertainment of an audience, were forgotten soon after their composition, and have but lately become a subject of attention. While the Troubadours obtained a lasting reputation by the gratitude of the early Italian poets, and were believed great geniuses because celebrated by Dante and Petrarch, the metrical compositions of the Trouveurs were forgotten, as Boccaccio and his followers did not acknowledge their obligations. Owing to the early neglect of their works, little can be known concerning the personal history of the innumerable authors of these rhymes, for no one, of course, thought of collecting notices of their lives at the only time when it could have been effected. The names, however, of a great number of them have been mentioned in their tales, and the appellation at the same time frequently points out the country of the poet. Jean de Boves, Gaurin or Guerin, and Rutebeuf, seem to be those who have written the greatest number of stories, and those, at the same time, whose compositions bear the closest resemblance to the Italian novels.

Fauchet, in his history of French poetry, was the first to renew a recollection of the Trouveurs and their writings, but his notices and extracts were not calculated to awaken curiosity. About the middle of last century, the Count de Caylus wrote a memoir on the Fabliaux, accompanied by some specimens and prose translations, which is inserted in the twentieth volume of the *Memoirs of the French Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres*. M. Barbazan also published a number of Fabliaux in their original form (a collection recently enlarged by M. Meon), but as they were followed by a very imperfect glossary, they could not be read but with the utmost difficulty. About the same time M. Imbert imitated some of the most entertaining in modern French verse. At length M. Le Grand, with indefatigable assiduity, published neither a free nor literal translation, but what he terms a *copie reduite* in French prose, of a



large, and I have no doubt, a judicious selection, which he made from the Fabliaux he found in manuscripts belonging to M. de St Palaye, and which were copies that celebrated author had procured from the library of the Abbey Saint Germain des Prés, Berne, Turin, and other places. In the course of his labours, Le Grand frequently found that pieces with the same title differed in particular incidents, and sometimes in the whole story. Sometimes again the story was the same and the language different, which shows that the Fabliaux were altered at pleasure, either by the minstrel, when given him to set to music by the Trouveurs, or by the transcribers who collected them. These variations Le Grand has frequently mingled, inserting in the version he principally followed any amusing incident, or instructive passage, which he found in the others, and to the whole he has added curious notes, tending to elucidate the manners and private life of the French nation during the 12th and 13th centuries.

The Fabliaux, as far as can be judged from the works of Barbazan and Le Grand, are interesting on their own account, as they, in some degree, show how much the human mind, by its own force, is able to accomplish, unguided by the aids of learning or the rules of criticism. In them, too, the customs and characters and spirit of the people, are painted in the truest and most lively manner. Resembling, in some degree, a comedy in their nature, they represent the ordinary actions of private life, and exhibit the nation, according to the expression of Le Grand, in an undress. "Opinions," continues that author, "prejudices, superstitions, tone of conversation, and manner of courtship, are to be found in them, and a number of these nowhere else. They are like certain pictures, of which the subject and the characters are imagined by the artist, but where all besides is truth and nature. In some respects the Fabliaux possess a great advantage over romances of chivalry. The authors of the latter compositions assumed a certain number of knights, to whom, according to the spirit of the age, they assigned certain exploits, but they were limited to one sort of action. On the other hand, the Trouveurs were confined, perhaps, as to the extent, but not the species of their productions. Hence

their delineations and characters have little resemblance to each other, and there are none of those endless repetitions, nor relation of incidents, accessory to the principal subject, which are so tiresome in romances of chivalry. The Fabliaux are also free from the ridiculous ostentation of learning, and those anachronisms and blunders in geography, so frequent in the fabulous histories of Arthur and Charlemagne. Add to this a simple and ingenious mode of narrative, representations of the human heart wonderfully just, and, above all, the honest simplicity of the relater, who appears convinced of what he recounts, the effect of which is persuasion, because in the midst of improbabilities he seems incapable of deceit."

These beauties are, however, counterbalanced by numerous defects. The fictions of the Trouveurs are sometimes extravagant, and their moral frequently scandalous; not merely that the expressions are blameable, which may be attributed to the rudeness of the age, or imperfection of language, but some stories are in their substance reprehensible. A few of these also are put into the mouth of women, and even the lips of a father in instructions to his daughters.

With such excellencies and defects, it is not surprising that the Fabliaux were often imitated in their own country. Some of them have been frequently modernised in French verse, and have formed subjects for the drama, as Moliere's *Medecin Malgre Lui*, which is from the Fabliau *Le Medicin de Brai, ou le Villain devenu Medicin*, a story which is also told by Grotius; several scenes of the *Malade Imaginaire* are from the Fabliau of the *Bourse pleine de sens*. The *Huitre of Boileau* is from *Les trois dames qui trouverent un anel*, and Rabelais appears to have been indebted for his Tirades on *Papelards, membrer, remembrer, &c.*, to the Fabliaux of *Sainte Leocade* and *Charlot le Juif*.

It is by the Italian novelists, however, that the Fabliaux have been chiefly imitated; and it is singular, considering the time that elapsed before they passed the Alps, the progress of literature in Italy during the interval, and the genius employed in imitation, that their faults should have been so little remedied, and their beauties so little embellished. Their licentiousness has been increased, and hardly



any thing has been added to the interest or variety of the subjects.

That they were imitated by the Italian novelists is a point that can admit of no doubt, even laying aside instances of particular plagiarism, and attending to the general manner of the Fabliaux.

Of the tricks played by one person to another, so common in Italian tales, there are many instances in the tales of the Trouveurs. Thus in a Fabliau by the Trouveur Courte Barbe, a young ecclesiastic returning from his studies (which he had been prosecuting at Paris) to Compiègne, met on the way three blind men seeking alms. Here, said he, pretending to give them something, is a *besant*; you will take care to divide it equally, it is intended for you all three. Though no one got the money, each believed that his comrade had received it, and, after loading their imagined benefactor with the accustomed blessings, they all went on their way rejoicing; the churchman following at a short distance to watch the issue of the adventure. They proceeded to a tavern in Compiègne, where they resolved to have a carousal, and ordered every thing of the first quality, in the tone of men who derived confidence from the weight of their purse. The ecclesiastic, who entered the house along with them, saw that the mendicants had a plenteous dinner, of which they partook, laughing, singing, drinking to each other's health, and cracking jokes on the simplicity of the good gentleman who had procured them this entertainment, and who was all the while within hearing of the merriment. Their mirth was prolonged till the night was far advanced, when they concluded this jovial day by retiring to rest. Next morning the host made out a bill. "Get us change for a besant," exclaim the blind. The landlord holds out his hand to receive it, and as no person gives it, he asks who of the three is paymaster? Every one says, "It is not I." From a corner of the room the ecclesiastic enjoys the rage of the landlord, and mutual reproaches of the blind, who accuse each other of purloining the money, proceed from words to blows, and throw the house into confusion and uproar. They at length are pacified, and suffered to depart on the churchman undertaking to pay their bill, of which he afterwards

ingeniously finds means to defraud the landlord.

In the Italian novels there are frequently related stratagems to procure provisions, and pork seems always to have been held in the highest estimation. In like manner, in the Fabliau Des Trois Larrons, by Jehan de Boves, there is detailed the endless ingenuity of two robbers to deprive their brother Travers, who had separated himself from them, and become an honest man, of a pig he had just killed, and also the address with which it is repeatedly recovered by the owner. The thieves had seen the pig one day when on a visit to their brother, and Travers, suspecting their intentions, hid it under a bread oven at the end of the room. At night, when the rogues, with the view of purloining the pig, came to the place where they had seen it hanging, they found nothing but the string by which it had been suspended. Travers, hearing a noise, goes out to see that his stable and barn are secure. One of the thieves who takes this opportunity to pick the lock of the door, approaches the bed where his brother's wife lay, and counterfeiting the voice of her husband, asks if she remembered where he had hung the pig. "Don't you recollect," said she instantly, "that we put it below the oven?" Having got this information, the thief immediately runs off with the pig on his shoulders; and Travers returning nearly at the same time, is laughed at by his wife for his want of memory. He instantly perceives what had happened, and sets out full speed after his brothers, who had taken a bye path leading to the wood where they intended to hide their booty. Travers comes up with him who carried the pig, and who was a little behind the other. "It is now time," says Travers, assuming his brother's voice, "that I should carry the load." The bearer instantly accedes to this proposal, but he has not gone on a hundred paces till he overtakes his other brother, when, perceiving that he had been ensnared, he strips himself and puts on a woman's night-cap. In this dress he gets to his brother's house before him, meets him at the door, and, appearing as his wife, exclaims in a feigned voice, "You have got the pig! give it me, and run to the stable, for I fear they are breaking in." On his return, Travers



discovers from his wife, still lamenting the loss of their pig, that he had been again cheated. He sets out after the pilferers, and comes to a place in the wood where they were dressing the pork at the foot of an oak, by a fire they had just lighted. Travers strips himself, climbs the tree, and, swinging on one of the branches, exclaims in the voice of their father, who had been hanged, "Wretches, you will end like me." Hearing this, the thieves run off in the utmost consternation, and leave the pig at the disposal of their brother. Immediately on his return home, the proper owner, to prevent farther accidents, begins to bake it in a pie, but soon perceives it proceeding up the chimney, appended to pieces of wood. The thieves, having recovered from their fright, had come back to the house of Travers, and seeing, by a hole in the wall, that there was now no time to be lost, were trying this last expedient from the roof of the dwelling. They are now invited by their kinsman to descend, and partake of the pie along with him. Accordingly they all sit down to table, and are cordially reconciled. These two specimens that have been given are, I think, quite in the spirit of the Italian novels, and as good tricks as those in the Decameron which are practised on Calandrino by his brother artists. (See N. 3 and 6, Day 8, &c.)

In the Fabliaux, too, there are innumerable instances of ingenious gallantry, and deceptions practised on husbands, precisely in the style of the Italian novelists, as *La Femme qui fit trois fois le tour des murs de l'Eglise*, where a woman, detected out of doors at night, persuades her husband she had been recommended to walk three times round the walls of the church, in order to have children: see also *La Robbe d'Ecarlate* (Le Grand, vol. ii. p. 265), and *La Culotte des Cordeliers* (vol. i. p. 299). In the *Lai du prisonnier* (iv. 126), where twelve ladies partake of the heart of a lover who had deceived them all, we have an exaggerated instance of that mixture of horror and gallantry which prevails, in some degree, in the Decameron, and more strongly in the imitations of the work of Boccaccio. The monastic orders are not so severely treated as by that author and his successors, but the priests are frequently satirized, and are made the principal actors, in a great proportion of

the most licentious stories, as *Constant du Hamel*, *La Longue Nuit*, *Le Boucher d'Abbeville*, *Le Pretre crucifié*, and *Le Pauvre Clerc*, which last is the origin of the *Freirs of Berwick*, attributed to Dunbar, and the well-known story of *The Monk and Miller's Wife*.

We have, besides, a series of stories in the Fabliaux, in which ludicrous incidents occur with dead bodies, which also became a favourite subject in Italy. There is not, however, in the whole Italian novels, so good a story of this description as that of *Les Trois Bossus*, by the *Trouveur Durant*.

Gentlemen, says the author, if you choose to listen I will recount to you an adventure which once happened in a castle, which stood on the bank of a river, near a bridge, and at a short distance from a town, of which I forget the name, but which we may suppose to be Douai. The master of this castle was humpbacked. Nature had exhausted her ingenuity in the formation of his whimsical figure. In place of understanding she had given him an immense head, which nevertheless was lost between his two shoulders, he had thick hair, a short neck, and a horrible visage.

Spite of his deformity, this bugbear be-thought himself of falling in love with a beautiful young woman, the daughter of a poor but respectable burgess of Douai. He sought her in marriage, and as he was the richest person in the district, the poor girl was delivered up to him. After the nuptials he was as much to pity as she, for, being devoured by jealousy, he had no tranquillity night nor day, but went prying and rambling every where, and suffered no stranger to enter the castle.

One day, during the Christmas festival, while standing sentinel at his gate, he was accosted by three humpbacked minstrels. They saluted him as a brother, as such asked him for refreshments, and at the same time, to establish the fraternity, they ostentatiously displayed their humps. Contrary to expectation, he conducted them to his kitchen, gave them a capon with some peas, and to each a piece of money over and above. Before their departure, however, he warned them never to return, on pain of being thrown into the river.



At this threat of the *Chatelain*, the minstrels laughed heartily, and took the road to the town, singing in full chorus, and dancing in a grotesque manner, in derision. He, on his part, without paying farther attention to them, went to walk in the fields.

The lady, who saw her husband cross the bridge, and had heard the minstrels, called them back to amuse her. They had not been long returned to the castle when her husband knocked at the gate, by which she and the minstrels were equally alarmed. Fortunately the lady perceived on a bedstead, in a neighbouring room, three empty coffers. Into each of these she stuffed a minstrel, shut the covers, and then opened the gate to her husband. He had only come back to spy the conduct of his wife as usual, and after a short stay went out anew, at which you may believe his wife was not dissatisfied. She instantly ran to the coffers to release the prisoners, for night was approaching, and her husband would not probably be long absent. But what was her dismay when she found them all three suffocated! Lamentation, however, was useless. The main object now was, to get rid of the dead bodies, and she had not a moment to lose.

She ran then to the gate, and seeing a peasant go by, she offered him a reward of thirty livres, and leading him into the castle, she took him to one of the coffers, and showing him its contents, told him he must throw the dead body into the river; he asked for a sack, put the carcase into it, pitched it over the bridge into the stream, and then returned quite out of breath to claim the promised reward.

"I certainly intended to satisfy you," said the lady, "but you ought first to fulfil the conditions of the bargain—you have agreed to rid me of the dead body, have you not? There, however, it is still;" saying this, she showed him the other coffer in which the second humpbacked minstrel had expired. At this sight the clown is perfectly confounded—how the devil! come back! a sorcerer!—he then stuffed the body into the sack, and threw it like the other over the bridge, taking care to put the head down, and to observe that it sunk.

Meanwhile the lady had again changed the

position of the coffers, so that the third was now in the place which had been successively occupied by the two others. When the peasant returned, she showed him the remaining dead body—"you are right, friend," said she, "he must be a magician, for there he is again." The rustic gnashed his teeth with rage—"what the devil! am I to do nothing but carry about this accursed humpback?" He then lifted him up with dreadful imprecations, and, having tied a stone round the neck, threw him into the middle of the current, threatening, if he came out a third time, to despatch him with a cudgel.

The first object that presented itself to the clown, on his way back for the reward, was the hunchbacked master of the castle, returning from his evening walk, and making towards the gate. At this sight the peasant could no longer restrain his fury—"Dog of a humpback, are you there again?" So saying, he sprung on the *Chatelain*, stuffed him into the sack, and threw him headlong into the river after the minstrels.

"I'll venture a wager you have not seen him this last time," said the peasant, entering the room where the lady was seated. She answered that she had not, "Yet you were not far from it," replied he, "the sorcerer was already at the gate, but I have taken care of him—be at your ease—he will not come back now."

The lady instantly comprehended what had occurred, and recompensed the peasant with much satisfaction.

"I conclude from this adventure," says the Trouveur, "that money can do every thing. It is in vain that a woman is fair—God would in vain exhaust all his power in forming her—if you have money she may be yours—witness the humpbacked chatelain in this fabliau." The Trouveur concludes with imprecations on the precious metals, and those who first used them, which was probably meant as an indirect hint to his audience. This story is in the *Nights of Straparola*, and the *Tartar Tales*, by Gueulette, under the title, *Les Trois Bossus de Damas*.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, even by attending to the general spirit of the *Fabliaux*, independent of examples

<sup>1</sup> This story of the little Hunchback, in the *Arabian Nights*, is probably the first origin of this tale;

but the immediate original is one which occurs in some versions of the *Seven Wise Masters*.



of direct plagiarism, there can, I think, be no doubt that they were the principal models of the Italian tales. In writing, as in conversation, a story seldom passes from one to another, without receiving some embellishment or alteration: The imitators may have filled up the general outline with colours of their own; they may have exercised their ingenuity in varying the drapery, in combining the groups, and forming them into more regular and animated pictures; but there is scarcely an Italian delineation, unless it represent some real incident, of which a sketch more or less perfect may not be seen in the *Fabliaux*. Instances, in which the *Trouveurs* have been absolutely copied, or closely followed, will be adduced, when we come to specify the works of their imitators.

It is not easy to point out precisely in what way the *Fabliaux* passed into Italy, or at what period they were first known beyond the Alps.

Since the progress of romantic fiction, however, has in many instances been clearly traced from the north to the south of Europe, from Asia to the western extremity of Christendom, and from the classical times of Greece, through the long course of the dark ages to the present period, it will not appear extraordinary that the Italians should have imbibed the fables of their neighbours and contemporaries. During the civil dissensions which were so long protracted in Italy, many of its inhabitants sought refuge in France. A great number of the usurers established in that country were of the Lombard nation. Part of the interior commerce of France was carried on by Italians, and they occupied a whole street in Paris, which was called that of the Lombards. The court of Rome, too, employed in France a number of Italian agents, to support the rights and collect the revenues of the church. Brunetto Latini wrote at Paris his *Tesoro*, and many Venetians went to study law in that capital. On the other hand, during the same period, the French, as is well known, frequently resorted to the different states of Italy, in the course of war or political intrigue. The French minstrels also frequently wandered beyond the Alps, bearing with them their *Lais* and their *Fabliaux*. Muratori (*Dissert. Antichit. Ital. tom. ii. c. 29*), reports

an ordinance of the municipal officers of Bologna, issued in 1288, prohibiting the French minstrels from blocking up the streets by exercising their art in public.—“*Ut Cantatores Francigenorum in plateis communibus ad cantandum morari non possunt.*”

There are many imitations of the tales of the *Trouveurs* in the

#### CENTO NOVELLE ANTICHE,

commonly called in Italy *Il Novellino*, the first regular work of the class with which we are now engaged that appeared in Europe; its composition being unquestionably prior to that of the *Decameron* of Boccaccio.

It is evident from the title of the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, that it was not a new and original production, but a compilation of stories already current in the world. The collection was made towards the end of the 13th century, and was formed from episodes in romances of chivalry; the *Fabliaux* of the French *Trouveurs*; the ancient chronicles of Italy; recent incidents; or jests and repartees current by oral tradition. That the stories derived from these sources were compiled by different authors, is apparent from the great variety of style; but who these authors were is still a problem in the literary annals of Italy. A number of them were long supposed to have been the work of Dante and Brunetto Latini, but this belief seems to rest on no very solid foundation. Quadrio, however, considers these tales as the production of a single writer, whom he hails as the unknown father of the Italian language:—“*L' autor di quest' opera è incerto; è però autore di lingua.*”

At first the *Cento Novelle Antiche* amounted only to ninety-six, but four were afterwards added to make up the hundred. The original number remained in MS. upwards of two centuries from the date of their composition. They were at length edited by Gualteruzzi, at Bologna, 1525, and were entitled *Le Ciento Novelle Antike*, on the frontispiece; and within—“*Fiori di parlare, di belle cortesie, e di belle valentie e doni, secondo ke per lo tempo passato anno fatto molti valenti uomini.*” This edition was published from a MS. belonging to Cardinal Bembo, and which had just



before been copied from the original MS. Gualteruzzi certainly conceived his edition to be the first, but Apostolo Zeno thinks that another, of which he had seen a copy at Padua, without date of year or place, is more ancient. Yet one would suppose that had an earlier edition existed, Gualteruzzi could not have been ignorant of the fact, nor would Bembo, whatever may be the value of an original MS., have procured a recent transcript, when an elegant impression was circulated through the world. A subsequent edition by the Giunti appeared at Florence, in 1572, and one still more recently at Naples, which is not held in much estimation. Some tales occur in one of these editions which are not found in another; and the stories are also differently arranged, which is extremely troublesome in reference.

The stories contained in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, though not very interesting from intrinsic merit, have become so as being the commencement of a series of compositions which obtained the greatest celebrity, and, by their influence on the English drama, laid the foundation of the most splendid efforts of human genius. It may, therefore, be proper to give a few examples, that the reader may appreciate the taste and spirit in which the *Cento Novelle* were written.

2. Is the story of a Greek king who detained one of the most learned of his subjects in confinement. A handsome Spanish horse being brought to court, as a present to the monarch, and the prisoner being interrogated as to its value, replies, that it is indeed a fine horse, but had been suckled by an ass. This fact is verified by sending to Spain, where it is discovered that the mare had died soon after producing the foal; on which the prisoner receives from the king, as a reward, an additional allowance of bread. On another occasion he acquaints his majesty, that there is a worm in one of his most precious jewels. The gem being dashed to pieces, the animal is found, and the captive gratified with a whole loaf each day. At length the king says to him, Whose son am I? He is answered, that he sprung from a baker; a piece of unexpected intelligence, which is confirmed by the queen-mother on her being sent for, and compelled by threats to confess the truth. Being

finally asked how he came to know all these things, the wise man replies, that the length of the horse's ears, and the heat of the gem, had suggested his two first answers, and that he had discovered his majesty's pedigree from the nature of the rewards he had repeatedly assigned him. This tale has a striking resemblance to that of the Three Sharpers and the Sultan, which is the second story of the recent addition to the *Arabian Tales* published by Mr Scott. Three sharpers introduce themselves to a sultan, the first as a skilful lapidary, the second as expert in the pedigree of horses, and the third as a genealogist. The sultan wishing to try their veracity, detains them in confinement, and after a while sends for the first to demand his opinion of a precious stone, which had been lately presented to him; when the sharper, having examined it, declares there is a flaw in its centre, and the jewel being cut in two, the blemish is discovered. He then informs the sultan that he had discerned the defect by the acuteness of his sight; and as a reward receives a mess of pottage and two cakes of bread. Some time after a beautiful black colt arrives, as a tribute from one of the provinces. The genealogist of horses being thereon summoned, affirms that the colt's dam was of a buffalo species, which is found to be correct on examining the person who had brought him. Having received the same recompense as his fellow-prisoner, the third sharper is now interrogated as to the parentage of the sultan himself, whom he pronounces to be the offspring of a cook, as his gratuities consisted in provisions from his kitchen, instead of the honours which it is customary for princes to bestow. This being confirmed by the confession of the sultan's mother, he abdicates the throne in favour of the genealogist, and conscientiously wanders through the world in disguise of a dervise. The first story in Mr Scott's publication, the *Sultan of Yemen and his Three Sons*, has also a considerable resemblance to this tale. There the three princes find out that a kid at table had been suckled by a bitch, and that the sultan at whose court they were was the son of a cook. Similar to these is the anecdote related of Virgil and Augustus. While the poet acted as one of the emperor's grooms, a colt of won-



derful beauty was sent in a gift to Cæsar. Virgil decided that it was of a diseased mare, and would neither be strong nor swift, and this opinion having proved correct, Augustus ordered his allowance of bread to be doubled. On another occasion, the emperor, who doubted his being the son of Octavius, having consulted Virgil on his pedigree, is told that he sprung from a baker; a conjecture which had been formed from the nature of his rewards.

6. Is from the 8th chapter of the *Gesta Romanorum*, where the Emperor Leo commands three statues of females to be made; one has a gold ring on a finger, pointing forward; another the ornament of a golden beard! the third a golden cloak and purple tunic; whoever should steal any of these ornaments was to be punished by an ignominious death. See Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (lib. 5).

30. Story of the Sheep passing a River, from the 11th tale of Petrus Alphonsus. This stupid story has been introduced in *Don Quixote*, where it is related by Sancho to his master. (Part I. b. iii. c. 6).

39. A person having offended certain ladies by his lampoons, and being about to receive the severest of all punishments, saves himself by exclaiming, that she who is most deserving of the satire should commence the attack. In Fauchet, a similar story is related of Jean de Meun, author of the continuation of the *Romaunt of the Rose*; but as the *Romaunt* was not finished till the year 1300, this tale is probably taken from one in the *Fabliaux* (Le Grand, 4. 126), where a knight disarms the fury of a number of jealous women, by bidding her strike first who had loved him most. There is a similar story adopted in one of the romantic poems of Italy, I think the *Orlando Innamorato*, where a knight escapes from a long situation, by inviting her to the attack who has least regard to her own and husband's honour. A like expedient is resorted to by the hero of the Italian comic romance, *Vita di Bertoldo*. All these stories probably had their origin in the expression by which our Saviour protected the woman taken in adultery.

Many of the *Cento Novelle* are merely classical fictions.

43. Is the fable of Narcissus. We have also the story of Diogenes, requesting Alexander to stand from betwixt him and the sun; and of the friends of Seneca, who, while lamenting that he should die innocent, are asked by the philosopher if they would have him die guilty; an anecdote usually related of Socrates.

50. Is from chapter 157 of the *Gesta Romanorum*. A porter at a gate of Rome taxes all deformed persons entering the city. The 5th of Alphonsus is also a story of this nature, where a porter, as a reward, has liberty to demand a penny from every person one-eyed, humpbacked, or otherwise deformed. A blind man refusing to pay, is found on farther examination to be humpbacked, and, beginning to defend himself, displays two crooked arms; he next tries to escape by flight: his hat falls off, and he is discovered to be leprous. When overtaken and knocked down, he appears moreover to be afflicted with hernia, and is amerced in fivepence.

51. Saladin's Installation to the Order of Knighthood: An abridgment of a *Fabliau*, called *L'Ordre de Chevalerie* (Le Grand, 1. 140).

56. The Story of the Widow of Ephesus, which was originally written by Petronius Arbiter, but probably came to the author of the *Cento Novelle Antiche* through the medium of the *Seven Wise Masters*, or the *Fabliau De la Femme qui se fist Putain sur la fosse de son mari*. (See p. 47).

68. An envious knight is jealous of the favour a young man enjoys with the king. As a friend, he bids the youth hold back his head while serving this prince, who, he says, was disgusted with his bad breath, and then acquaints his master that the page did so, from being offended with his majesty's breath. The irascible monarch forthwith orders his kiln-man to throw the first messenger he sends to him into the furnace, and the young man is accordingly despatched on some pretended errand, but happily passing near a monastery on his way, tarries for some time to hear mass. Meanwhile, the contriver of the fraud, impatient to learn the success of his stratagem, sets out for the house of the kiln-man, and arrives before his intended victim. On inquiring if the commands of his master have been fulfilled, he is answered



that they will be immediately executed, and, as the first messenger on the part of the sovereign, is forthwith thrown into the furnace. This tale is copied from one of the Contes Devots, intended to exemplify the happy effects that result from hearing mass, and entitled *D'un Roi qui voulut faire bruler le fils de son Seneschal*. It is also chapter 95 of the Anglican *Gesta Romanorum*.

A few tales seem to have had their origin in romances of chivalry ; the

81. Is the Story of the Lady of Scalot, who died for love of Lancelot du Lac ; and another is the Story of King Meliadus and the Knight Without Fear.

82. Outline of the Pardonere's Tale in Chaucer.

A few of the Cento Novelle are fables. Thus in

91. The mule pretends that his name is written on the hoof of his hind-foot. The wolf attempts to read it, and the mule gives him a kick on the forehead, which kills him on the spot. On this the fox, who was present, observes, "*Ogni huomo che sa lettera non é savio.*"

The last of the original number of the Cento Novelle is from the 124th chapter of the *Gesta Romanorum*, of the knights who intercede for their friend with a king, by each coming to court in a singular attitude.

It has already been mentioned, that four tales were added to complete the number of a hundred. One of these is the story of Grasso Legnajuolo, which has been frequently imitated ; in this tale Grasso is persuaded to doubt of his own identity. Different persons are posted on the street to accost him as he passes, by the name of another ; he at length allows himself to be taken to prison for that person's debts, and the mental confusion in which he is involved during his confinement is well described. Domenico Manni asserts, that this was a real incident, and he tells where and when it happened. Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, he says, contrived the trick, and the sculptor Donatello had a hand in its execution.

A great proportion of the tales of the Cento Novelle are altogether uninteresting, but in

their moral tendency they are much less exceptionable than the *Fabliaux*, by which they were preceded, or the Italian *Novelettes*, by which they were followed. In general, it may be remarked, that those stories are the best which claim an eastern origin, or are derived from the *Gesta Romanorum* and the *Fabliaux*. This, from the examples given, the reader will have difficulty in believing ; but those tales which are founded on real incidents, or are taken from the annalists of the country, are totally uninteresting. The repartees are invariably flat, and the jests insipid.

This remark is, I think, also applicable to the

#### DECAMERON OF BOCCACCIO ;

those tales derived from the *Fabliaux* being invariably the most ingenious and graceful. This celebrated work succeeds, in chronological order, to the Cento Novelle, and is by far the most renowned production in this species of composition. It is styled *Decameron*, from ten days having been occupied in the relation of the tales, and is also entitled *Principe Galeotto*,—an appellation which the deputies appointed for correction of the *Decameron* consider as derived from the 5th canto of Dante's *Inferno*, Galeotto being the name of that seductive book, which was read by Paulo and Francesca :—

"Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse," &c.

The *Decameron* is supposed to have been commenced about the year 1348, when Florence was visited by the plague, and finished about 1358. Thus only a period of half a century had intervened from the appearance of the Cento Novelle, and the infinite superiority of the *Decameron* over its predecessor, marks in the strongest manner the improvement which, during that interval, had taken place in taste and literature.

Still, however, the *Decameron* must be chiefly considered as the product of the distinguished mental attainments of its author. Boccaccio was admirably fitted to excel in this sort of composition, both from natural genius,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "I well remember," says he, in his *Genealogy of the Gods*, "that before seven years of age, when as yet I had seen no fictions, and applied to no

masters, I had a natural turn for fiction, and produced some trifling tales."—*Lib. xv.*



and the species of education he had received. His father apprenticed him in early youth to a merchant, with whom he continued many years, and in whose service he visited different parts of Italy, and, according to some authorities, the capital of France. During these excursions he must have become intimately acquainted with the manners of his native country; and at Paris he would acquire the French language, and perhaps, study the French authors. Tired with his mercantile employments, Boccaccio next applied himself to canon law, and, in the prosecution of this study, he had occasion to peruse many works, from which, as shall be afterwards shown, he has extracted materials for the Decameron. Disgusted with law, he finally devoted himself to literature, and was instructed by various masters in all the learning of the age. The greater part of the Decameron, it is true, was written before he had made proficiency in the Greek language; but it cannot be doubted, that, previous to its public appearance, he embellished this work by interweaving fables, which he met with among Greek authors, or which were imparted to him by his master Leontius Pilatus, whom he styles, in the Genealogy of the Gods, a repository of Grecian history and fable.

An investigation of the sources whence the stories in the Decameron have been derived, has long exercised the learning of Italian critics, and has formed the subject of a keen and lasting controversy. The light hitherto thrown on the dispute is such as might be expected, where erudition has been employed for the establishment of a theory, instead of the discovery of truth. Many of the commentators on Boccaccio have been anxious to prove, that his stories are for the most part borrowed from the earlier tales of his own country, and those of the French Trouveurs; others have argued, that the great proportion is of his own invention; while Domenico Manni, in his History of the Decameron, has attempted to establish that they have been mostly derived from the ancient chronicles

and annals of Italy, or have had their foundation on incidents that actually occurred during the age of Boccaccio. There is one fallacy, however, by which this author seems misled, and of which he does not appear to have been aware. This is assuming that a story is true, merely because the characters themselves are not fictitious. Manni seems to have thought, that if he could discover that a merchant of a certain name existed at a certain period, the tale related concerning him must have had a historical foundation. Nothing need be said to expose the absurdity of such conclusions, which would at once transform the greater number of the Arabian tales into historic relations concerning Haroun Alraschid. The adoption of real characters or real places, on which to found a system of romantic incident, is one of the most common, and must have been one of the earliest, artifices in fictitious narrative.

To the sources whence they have flowed may be partly ascribed the immorality of the tales of Boccaccio, and the introduction of numerous stories where our disapprobation of the crime is overlooked, in the delight we experience from the description of the ingenuity by which it was accomplished. This may also be in some degree accounted for by the character of the author, and manners of the time. But that the relation of such stories should be assigned to ladies, or represented as told in their presence,<sup>1</sup> and that the work, immediately on its appearance, should have become avowedly popular among all classes of readers, is not so much to be imputed to popular rudeness, as to a particular event of the author's age. Just before Boccaccio wrote, the customs and manners of his fellow-citizens underwent a total alteration, owing to the plague which had prevailed in Florence, in the same way as the surviving inhabitants of Lisbon became more dissolute after their earthquake, and the Athenians after the plague by which their city was afflicted. (Thucydides, book 2d.) "Such," says Boccaccio himself in his introduction,

<sup>1</sup> It is evident that Boccaccio afterwards became ashamed of the licentiousness of the Decameron, and uneasy at the bad moral tendency of some of its stories. In a letter to Maghinardo de Cavalcanti, marshal of Sicily, which is quoted by Tira-

boschi, Boccaccio, speaking of his Decameron, says, "sane quod inclitas mulieres tuas domesticas, nugas meas legere permiseris non laudo; quin immo quæso, per fidem tuam, ne feceris."



"was the public distress, that laws divine and human were no longer regarded." And we are farther informed by Warton, on the authority of contemporary authors, that the women who had outlived this fatal malady, having lost their husbands and parents, gradually threw off those customary formalities and restraints which had previously regulated their conduct. To females the disorder had been peculiarly fatal, and from want of attendants of their own sex, the ladies were obliged to take men alone into their service, which contributed to destroy their habits of delicacy, and gave an opening to unsuitable freedoms. "As to the monasteries," continues Warton, "it is not surprising that Boccaccio should have made them the scenes of his most libertine stories. The plague had thrown open the gates of the cloister. The monks and nuns wandered abroad, partaking of the common liberties of life and the world, with an eagerness proportioned to the severity of former restraint. When the malady abated, and the religious were compelled to return to their cloisters, they could not forsake their attachment to secular indulgence. They continued to practise the same free course of life, and would not submit to the disagreeable and unsocial injunctions of their respective orders. Contemporary historians give a dreadful picture of the unbounded debaucheries of the Florentines on this occasion, and ecclesiastical writers mention this period as the grand epoch of the relaxation of monastic discipline."

That ecclesiastical abuses and immorality afforded ample scope for satire, does not require to be proved; but that Boccaccio should have dared to expose them, is the second, and perhaps the most curious problem, connected with the history of the Decameron. It would appear, however, that the geniuses of every country in that age, when papal authority was at its height, employed themselves in satirizing the church. We have already seen the liberty that was taken in this respect, by the authors of the *Fabliaux*; and their contemporary, Jean de Meun, in his *Roman de la Rose*, introduces Faux Semblant habited as a monk. In England, about 1350, the corruptions of the clergy, and the absurdities of superstition, couched, it is true, under a thick veil of allegorical invention, were ridiculed

with much spirit and humour in the visions of *Piers Plowman*, while the *Sompnour's* tale in Chaucer openly exposed the tricks and extortions of the mendicant friars. At first sight it may appear, that the freedom of Boccaccio was more extraordinary than that of the *Trouveurs*, of Chaucer, or Longland, as he wrote so near the usual seat of church authority; but it must be recollected, that when Boccaccio attacks the abuses of Rome, it is not properly the church that he vilifies, as the pontifical throne had been transferred from Italy to Avignon, half a century previous to the composition of the Decameron. The former capital is spoken of in similar terms by the gravest writers who were contemporary with Boccaccio. Thus Petrarch terms it,

"Gia Roma, or Babilonia falsa e ria."

The whole city was excommunicated in 1327, and, according to all the authors of the period, presented a terrible scene of vice and confusion. Hence the frequent attacks by Boccaccio on Rome, so far from being considered as marks of disrespect, may be considered as proofs of his zeal for the church, or at least for the schism to which he belonged. Besides, at that period no inquisition existed in Italy, and authors were not accused of heresy for defaming the monks. Much of Boccaccio's satire, too, is directed against the friars, who wandered about as preachers and confessors, and were no favourites of the regular clergy, whom they deprived of profits and inheritances. The church was also aware that the novelists wrote merely for the sake of pleasantries, and without any desire of reformation:—"Ce n'est point," says Mad. de Staël, "sous un point de vue philosophique, qu'ils attaquent les abus de la religion: ils n'ont pas comme quelques-uns de nos écrivains, le but de reformer les défauts dont ils plaisantent; ce qu'ils veulent seulement c'est s'amuser d'autant plus que le sujet est plus sérieux. C'est la ruse des enfans envers leur pédagogues; ils leur obéissent à condition qu'il leur soit permis de s'en moquer." Yet still, had printing been invented in the age of Boccaccio, and had he published the Decameron on his personal responsibility, his boldness would be totally inexplicable: But it will be remarked, that the Decameron could only be



privately circulated, that it was not published for a hundred years after the death of the author; and though the office of an editor might be sufficiently perilous, he would not, even if discovered, have undergone the severity of punishment which would perhaps have been inflicted on the author.

The Italian novelist has been highly extolled for the beautiful and appropriate manner in which he has introduced his stories, which are so much in unison with the gaiety of the scenes by which the narrators are surrounded. In the beginning of the first day he informs us, that in the year 1348, Florence was visited by a plague, of the effects of which he gives an admirable description, imitated from Thucydides. During its continuance, seven young ladies accidentally met in the church of St Mary. At the suggestion of Pampinea, the eldest of their number, they resolved on leaving the city which was thus terribly afflicted. Having joined to their company three young men, who were their admirers, and who entered the chapel during their deliberation, they retired to a villa two miles distant from Florence. A description of the beauty of the grounds, the splendour of the habitation, and agreeable employments of the guests, form a pleasing contrast to the awful images of misery and disease that had been previously presented. The first scene is indeed one of death and desolation, and neither Thucydides nor Lucretius have painted the great scourge of human nature in colours more sombre and terrific: but it changes to pictures the most delightful and attractive, of gay fields, clear fountains, wooded hills, and magnificent castles. Bembo has remarked the charming variety in the rural descriptions, which commence and terminate so many days of the Decameron (Prose, lib. 2), and which possess for the Florentines a local truth and beauty which we can scarcely appreciate. The abode to which the festive band first retire, may be yet recognised in the Poggio Gherardi; the palace described in the prologue to the third day, is the Villa Palmieri, and the valley so beautifully painted near the conclusion of the sixth, is that on which the traveller yet gazes with rapture from the summit of Fiesole. In these delicious abodes the manner of passing the time seems in general to have been this:

—Before the sun was high, a repast was served up, which appears to have corresponded to our breakfast, only it consisted chiefly of confections and wine. After this, some went to sleep, while others amused themselves in various pastimes. About mid-day they all assembled round a delightful fountain, where a sovereign being elected to preside over this entertainment, each related a tale. The party consisting of ten, and ten days of the fortnight during which this mode of life continued, being partly occupied with story-telling, the number of tales amounts to a hundred; and the work itself has received the name of the Decameron. A short while after the novels of the day were related, the company partook of a supper, or late dinner, and the evening concluded with songs and music.

Boccaccio was the first of the Italians who gave a dramatic form to this species of composition. In this respect the Decameron has a manifest advantage over the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, and, in the simplicity of the frame, is superior to the eastern fables, which, in this respect, Boccaccio appears to have imitated. Compared with those compositions which want this dramatic embellishment, it has something of the advantage which a regular comedy possesses over unconnected scenes. Hence, the more natural and defined the plan—the more the characters are diversified, and the more the tales are suited to the characters, the more conspicuous will be the skill of the writer, and his work will approach the nearer to perfection. It has been objected to the plan of Boccaccio, that it is not natural that his company should be devoted to merriment, when they had just interred their nearest relations, or abandoned them in the jaws of the pestilence, and when they themselves were not secure from the distemper, since it is represented as raging in the country with almost equal violence as in the city. But, in fact, it is in such circumstances that mankind are most disposed for amusement; amid general calamities every thing is lost but individual care; it is then, “*Vivamus, mea Lesbia!*” and even the expectation of death only urges to the speediness of enjoyment:—

“*Falle diem; mediis mors venit atra jocis.*”

*Sannaz. Ep.*

“The Athenians,” (says Thucydides in his



celebrated description of the Pestilence,) "seeing the strange mutability of outward condition; the rich untimely cut off, and their wealth pouring suddenly on the indigent, thought it prudent to catch hold of speedy enjoyments and quick gusts of pleasure, persuaded that their bodies and their wealth might be their own merely for the day. No one continued resolute enough to form any honest or generous design, when so uncertain whether he should live to effect it. Whatever he knew could improve the pleasure or satisfaction of the present moment, *that* he determined to be honour and interest. Reverence of the gods, or laws of society, laid no restraint upon them; and as the heaviest of judgments to which man could be doomed, was already hanging over their heads, they snatched the interval of life for pleasure before it fell."—*Smith's Thucydides*, vol. ii.

The gaiety, therefore, of the characters introduced by Boccaccio in his Decameron, so far from being a defect in his plan, evinces his knowledge of human nature. However, it must be admitted, that the action of the Decameron is faulty, from being in a great measure indefinite. It is not limited by its own nature, as by the close of a pilgrimage or voyage, but is terminated at the will of the author; and the most prominent reason for the return of the company to Florence is, that the budget of tales is exhausted. The characters, too, resemble each other, and have no peculiar shades of disposition, except Dioneo (by whom Boccaccio is said to represent himself) and Philostrato; of whom the former is of a comical, and the latter of a melancholy, frame of mind. It was thus impossible to assign characteristic stories to the whole *dramatis personæ*; and though there be two persons whose dispositions have been contrasted, some of the most ludicrous stories have been given to Philostrato; and the tale of Griselda, which is generally accounted the most pathetic in the work, is put into the mouth of Dioneo. On this point, however, it may be remarked, that although, as in the case of Chaucer, it may not be difficult to assign one distinctive story to a strongly-marked character, yet it was scarcely in the power of human genius to have invented ten discriminative tales, each of which was to be expres-

sive of the manners and modes of thinking of one individual. Besides, where the characters were so few, this would have given a monotony to the whole work, and the introduction of a greater number would have been inconsistent with the basis of the author's plan.

If the frame in which Boccaccio has set his Decameron be compared with that in which the Canterbury Tales have been enclosed by Chaucer, who certainly imitated the Italian novelist, it will be found that the time chosen by Boccaccio is infinitely preferable to that adopted by the English poet. The pilgrims of the latter relate their stories on a journey, though they are on horseback, and are twenty-nine in number; and it was intended, had the author completed his plan, that this rabble should have told the remainder of their tales in an abominable tavern at Canterbury. On the other hand, the Florentine assembly discourse in tranquillity and retirement, surrounded by all the delights of rural scenery, and all the magnificence of architecture. But then the frame of Chaucer afforded a much greater opportunity of displaying a variety of striking and dramatic characters, and thence of introducing characteristic tales. His assemblage is mixed and fortuitous, and his travellers are distinguished from each other both in person and character. Even his serious pilgrims are marked by their several sorts of gravity, and the ribaldry of his low characters is different. "I see," says Dryden, "every one of the pilgrims in the Canterbury Tales as distinctly as if I had supped with them." All the company in the Decameron, on the other hand, are fine ladies and gentlemen of Florence, who retire to enjoy the sweets of select society, and who would scarcely have tolerated the intrusion of such figures as the Miller or the Sompnour.

Having said this much of the general features and introduction of the Decameron, we shall now direct our attention to the tales of which it is composed; the merit of their incidents; the sources from which they have originated, and their influence on the literature of subsequent ages. These tales have been variously classified by different critics. The most complete division of them has been made by Jason de Nares in his *Poetica* (par. 3). "Si dimostra dalla distinzione del De-



camerone che l' autore le divide tacitamente nel proemio in *Novelle*, come son quelle di Calandrino; in *Parabole*, come è quella di Mitridanes, e di Milesio, e di Giosepho; in *Istorie* come la Marchese di Saluzzo e Griselda; e in *Favole* come Guglielmo Rossiglione, Conte Anguersa, e Minghino, e infinite altre; intendendo per favola, nel modo che Aristotile nella sua poetica, argomenti e azione, o tragiche eroiche o comiche." This classification is extremely vague and fanciful, nor would it be easy to fix on one more satisfactory and defined. The only division to which the Decameron can properly be subjected, is the artificial one contrived by the author. In eight of the ten days into which it is distributed, a particular subject is assigned to the relaters, as stories of comical or melancholy vicissitudes of life, splendid examples of generosity, &c. Dioneo, however, is exempted from this restriction, and is allowed to indulge in whatever topic he chooses. His story is always the last, and generally the most licentious, of the day.

This limitation of subject does not commence in the first day of the Decameron, during which each of the company relates whatever is most agreeable to him, and Pamphilus, by command of the queen, commences the entertainment.

DAY I. 1. Musciatto Franzesi, a wealthy French merchant, when about to accompany the brother of his king to Tuscany, intrusted Ciappelletto, a notary from Prato, who had frequented his house in Paris, with the charge of collecting, in his absence, some debts that were due to him. To this choice he was led by the malevolent disposition and profligate character of Ciappelletto, which he thought would render him fit to deal with his debtors, who, for the most part, were persons of indifferent credit and bad faith. Ciappelletto, in the course of exacting the sums that were owing to his employer, proceeded to Burgundy, and, during his stay in that province, he lodged with two brothers, who were usurers. Persons of this description are common characters in the *Fabliaux* and Italian novels; they came to France from Italy, and established themselves chiefly at Nismes and Montpellier, and received the name of Lombards. They lent on pledge at twenty per

cent., and if the loan was not repaid at the end of six months the pledge was forfeited. While residing in the house of the usurers, Ciappelletto is suddenly taken ill. During his sickness he one day overhears his hosts deliberate on turning him out, lest, being unable to obtain absolution, on account of the multitude and enormity of his crimes, his body should be refused church sepulchre, and their house be, in consequence, assaulted and plundered—compliments which it seems the mob were predisposed to pay them. Ciappelletto desires them to send for a priest, and give themselves no farther uneasiness, as he will make a satisfactory confession. The holy man having arrived, inquires, among other things, if he had ever sinned in gluttony. His penitent, with many groans, answers, that after long fasts he had often eat bread and water with too much relish and pleasing appetite, especially when he had previously suffered great fatigue in prayer or in pilgrimage. The priest again asks if he had ever been transported with anger? to which Ciappelletto replies, that he had often felt emotions of resentment when he heard young men swear, or saw them haunt taverns, follow vanities, and affect the follies of the world. Similar answers are received by the confessor to all the questions he puts to his penitent, who, when now about to receive absolution, spontaneously acknowledges, with many groans and other testimonies of repentance, that he had once in his life spit in the house of God, and had on one occasion desired his maid to sweep his house on a holiday. All this passes to the great amusement of the usurers, who were posted behind a partition. The friar, astonished at the sanctity of the penitent, gives him immediate absolution and benediction. On the death of Ciappelletto, which happened soon after, his confessor having called a chapter, informs his brethren of his holy life. The brotherhood watch that night in the place where the corse lay, and next morning, dressed in their hoods and surplices, attend the body, with much solemnity, to the chapel of their monastery, where a funeral oration is pronounced over the remains, in which the preacher expatiates on the chastity and fastings of the deceased. Such is the effect of this discourse on the au-



dience, that when the service is ended the funeral garments are rent in pieces, as precious relics ; and so great was the reputation of this wretch for sanctity, that after the interment all the neighbourhood long paid their devotions at his sepulchre, and miracles were believed to be wrought at the shrine of Saint Ciappelletto.

This tale seems intended as a satire on the Romish church, for having canonized such a number of worthless persons. It is but an indifferent commencement to the work of Boccaccio, yet there is something amusing in the deep affliction Ciappellato expresses for trifling transgressions, when we have just read the long list of enormities with which the narrative begins.

The story of Ciappelletto is one of the tales of the Decameron supposed by Domenico Manni to be founded on fact ; but of this he has adduced no proof, except that in the year 1300, a person of the name of Muccatto did, in fact, as mentioned in the tale, reside with a brother of the king of France.

2. Giannotto, a mercer in Paris, had an intimate friend called Abraam, of the Jewish persuasion, whom he attempted to convert to Christianity. After much solicitation and argument, Abraam promised to change his religion, if on going to Rome he should find, from the morals and behaviour of the clergy, that the faith of his friend was preferable to his own. This intention was opposed by Giannotto, who dreaded the consequence of the Jew beholding the depraved conduct of the leaders of the church. His resolution, however, was not to be shaken, and, on arriving at Rome, he found the pope, cardinal, and prelates, immersed in gluttony, drunkenness, and every detestable vice. On returning to Paris, he declared to Giannotto his determination to be baptized, being convinced that that religion must be true, and supported by the Holy Spirit, which had flourished and spread over the earth, in spite of the enormities of its ministers.

This story is related as having really happened, by Benvenuto da Imola, in his commentary on Dante, which was written in 1376, but none of which was ever printed, except a few passages quoted by Muratori in his Italian Antiquities *medii ævi*.

On account of the severe censures contained against the church in this and the preceding tale, they both received considerable corrections by order of the council of Trent.

3. The sultan Saladin wishing to borrow a large sum from a rich but niggardly Jew of Alexandria, called him into his presence. Saladin was aware he would not lend the money willingly, and he was not disposed to force a compliance : he therefore resolved to ensnare him by asking whether he judged the Mahometan, Christian, or Jewish faith to be the true one. In answer to this the Jew related the story of a man who had a ring, which in his family had always carried the inheritance along with it to whomsoever it was bequeathed. The possessor having three sons, and being importuned by each to bestow it on him, secretly ordered two rings to be made, precisely similar to the first, and privately gave one of the three to each of his children. At his death it was impossible to ascertain who was the heir. "Neither," says the Jew, "can it be discovered which is the true religion of the three faiths given by the Father to his three people. Each believes itself the heir of God, and obeys his commandments, but which is the pure law is hitherto uncertain." The sultan was so pleased with the ingenuity of the Jew, that he frankly confessed the snare he had laid, received him into great favour, and was accommodated with the money he wanted.

Most of those stories which seem to contain a sneer against the Christian religion, came from the Jews and Arabians who had settled in Spain. The novel of Boccaccio probably originated in some Rabinnical tradition. In the Schebet Judah, a Hebrew work, translated into Latin by Gentius, but originally written by the Jew Salomo Ben Virga, and containing the history of his nation from the destruction of the Temple to his own time, a conversation which passed between Peter the Elder, King of Spain, and the Jew Ephraim Sanchus, is recorded in that part of the work which treats of the persecutions which the Jews suffered in Spain. Peter the Elder, in order to entrap Ephraim, asked him whether the Jewish or Christian religion was the true one. The Jew requested three days to consider, and at the end of that period he told



the king "that one of his neighbours, who had lately gone abroad, left each of his sons a precious jewel, and that being called in to decide which was the most valuable, he had advised the decision to be deferred till the return of their father. In like manner," continued the Jew, "you ask whether the gem received by Jacob or Esau be most precious, but I recommend that the judgment should be referred to our Father who is in Heaven." I believe the *Schebet Judah* was not written till near a century after the appearance of the *Decameron*, but the stories related in it had been long current among the Jewish Rabbins. The author of the *Gesta Romanorum* probably derived from them the story of the three rings, which forms the 89th chapter of that romantic compilation. From the *Gesta Romanorum* it passed to the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, of which the 72d tale is probably the immediate original of the story in the *Decameron*.

We are told in the *Menagiana*, that some persons believed that Boccaccio's story of the rings gave rise to the report concerning the existence of the book *De Tribus Impostoribus*, about which there has been so much controversy. Mad. de Staël says, in her "Germany," that Boccaccio's novel formed the foundation of the plot of *Nathan the Wise*, which is the masterpiece of Lessing, the great founder of the German drama.

4. A young monk, belonging to a monastery in the neighbourhood of Florence, prevails on a peasant girl, whom he meets on his walks, to accompany him to his cell. While there he is overheard by the abbot, who approaches the door to listen with more advantage. The monk, hearing the sound of feet, peeps through a crevice in the wall, and perceives his superior at the entrance. In order to save himself from chastisement, he resolves to lead the abbot into temptation. Pretending that he was going abroad, he leaves with him, as was customary, the keys of the cell. It is soon unlocked by the abbot, and the monk, who, instead of going out, had concealed himself in the dormitory, is supplied with ample materials for recrimination. I am surprised that this story has not been versified by Fontaine, as it is precisely in the style of those he delighted to imitate.

Of this day the six remaining tales consist

merely in sayings and reproofs, some of which are represented as having had the most wonderful effects. Nothing can be more ridiculous than feigning that a character should be totally changed, that the avaricious should become liberal, as in the eighth, or the indolent active, as in the ninth novel, by means of a repartee, which would not be tolerated in the most ordinary jest-book.

The evening of the first day was passed in singing and dancing, and a new queen, or mistress of ceremonies, was appointed for the succeeding one.

DAY II. contains stories of those who, after experiencing a variety of troubles, at length meet with success, contrary to all hope and expectation.<sup>1</sup>

The merit of the first story depends entirely on the mode of relating it; and however comical and lively in the original, would appear insipid in an abridged translation.

2. Rinaldo d'Asti, on his way from Ferrara to Verona, inadvertently joined some persons, whom he mistook for merchants, but who were in reality highwaymen. As the conversation happened to turn upon prayer, Rinaldo mentioned that when going on a journey he always repeated the paternoster of St Julian, by which means he had invariably obtained good accommodation at night. The robbers said they had never repeated the paternoster, but that it would be seen which had the best lodging that evening. Having come to a retired place, they stripped their fellow traveller, took what money he had, and left him naked at the side of the road, with many banters concerning St Julian. Rinaldo, having recovered, arrives late at night at the gates of Castel Guglielmo, a fortified town. A widow, who was now the mistress of Azzo, marquis of Ferrara, possessed a house near the ramparts. She had been sitting up expecting her lover, for whom she had prepared the bath, and provided an elegant repast: but as she had just received intelligence that he could not come, she calls in Rinaldo, whom she hears at the porch. He is hospitably entertained by her at supper, and, for that night, makes up to his hostess for the absence of the marquis. The robbers, on the

<sup>1</sup> Di chi da diversi così infestato sia oltre alla speranza riuscito a liete fine.



other hand, are apprehended and thrown into prison that very evening, and executed on the following morning.

St Julian was eminent for providing his votaries with good lodging: in the English title of his legend he is called the *gode Herbejour*; and Chaucer, in his *Canterbury Tales*, bestows on the Frankelien, on account of his luxurious hospitality, the title of Seint Julian. When the child Anceaume, in the romance of Milles and Amys, is carried on shore by the swan, and hospitably received by the woodman, it is said, "qu' il avoit trouvé *Sainct Julien* a son commandement, sans dire paternostre." This saint was originally a knight, and, as was prophesied to him by a stag, he had the singular hap to kill both his father and mother by mistake. As an atonement for his carelessness, he afterwards founded a sumptuous hospital for the accommodation of travellers, who, in return for their entertainment, were required to repeat paternosters for the souls of his unfortunate parents. The story of St Julian is related in chapter eighteen of the *Gesta Romanorum*, and in the *Legenda Aurea*. It is this novel of Boccaccio that has given rise to *L'oraison de St Julien* of Fontaine, and *Le Talisman*, a comedy, by La Motte. There is also some resemblance between it and part of the old English comedy, *The Widow*, which was produced by the united labours of Ben Johnson, Fletcher, and Middleton. In that play, Ansaldo, after being robbed and stripped of his clothes, is received in the house of Philippa, to whom he was a stranger, but who had prepared a banquet, and was sitting up in expectation of the arrival of her lover Francisco. (See Dodsley's Collection, vol. xii.)

5. Andreuccio, a horse-dealer at Perugia, hearing that there were good bargains to be had at Naples, sets out for that city. His purse, which he ostentatiously displays in the Neapolitan market, is coveted by a Sicilian damsel, who, having informed herself concerning the family of Andreuccio, sends for him in the evening to her house, which is described as very elegant. The furniture is costly, the apartments are perfumed with roses and orange flowers, and a sumptuous entertainment is prepared. From this, and another tale of Boccaccio, and more particularly from the 12th novel of Fortini, it would

appear that persons of this description lived, at that period, in a very splendid style in the south of Italy. The courtesan having persuaded Andreuccio, by an artful story, that she is a sister whom he had lost, he agrees to remain that night at her lodgings. After he had thrown off his clothes, he falls, by means of a trap-board, which was prepared by her contrivance, into the inmost recess of a place seldom resorted to from choice, on which his sister takes possession of his purse and garments. Being at length extricated from his uncomfortable situation by assistance of some of the neighbours, he judiciously proceeds towards the sea-shore; but on his way he meets with certain persons who were proceeding to violate the sepulchre of an archbishop of Naples, who had been interred that day, with many ornaments, particularly a valuable ring, on the body. Andreuccio having imparted to them his story, they promise to share with him their expected booty, as a compensation for the loss he had sustained. When the tomb is at length broken into, Andreuccio is deputed to strip the corse. He takes possession of the ring for himself, and hands to his comrades the other ornaments, as the pastoral staff and mitre: but in order that they may not be obliged to share these with him, they shut him up in the vault. From this situation he is delivered by some one breaking into the sepulchre on a similar speculation with that in which he had himself engaged, and returns to his own country reimbursed for all his losses by the valuable ring. The first part of this story has been imitated in many tales and romances, particularly in *Gil Blas*, where a deceit, similar to that practised by the Sicilian damsel, has been adopted. One of the *Fabliaux* of the *Trouveurs*, entitled *Boivin de Provins* (Barbazan, 3. 357), is the origin of all those numerous tales, in which the unwary are cozened by courtezans assuming the character of lost relations.

7. A sultan of Babylon had a daughter, who was the fairest princess of the east. In recompense of some eminent services rendered by the King of Algarva, she is sent by her father to be espoused by that monarch. A tempest arises during the voyage, and the ship, which conveyed the destined bride, splits



on the island of Majorca. The princess is saved by the exertions of Pericone, a nobleman of the country, who had perceived from shore the distress of the vessel. She is hospitably entertained in his castle by her preserver, who soon falls in love with her; and one night, after a feast, during which he had served her liberally with wine, she bestows on him what had been intended for his majesty of Algarva. The Princess of Babylon passes successively into the possession of the brother of Pericone—the Prince of Morea—the Duke of Athens—Constantius, son of the Emperor of Constantinople—Osbech, King of the Turks—one of Osbech's officers, and a merchant, who was a friend of this officer. Her first lovers obtained her by murdering their predecessors: she afterwards elopes with her admirers, and is at length transferred by legacy or purchase. While residing with her last and least distinguished protector, she meets with Antigonus, an old servant of her father, by whose means she is restored to him. As the princess, by an artful tale, persuades the sultan that she had austere spent the period of her absence in a convent, he scruples not to send her, according to her original destination, to the King of Algarva, who does not discover that he is the ninth proprietor.—“*Bocca Basciata non perde ventura, anzi rinnuova come fa la luna.*”

This story is taken from the romance of Xenophon Ephesius, and has furnished Fontaine with his tale *La Fiancée du Roi de Garbe*.

8. Does not possess much merit or originality of invention. The revenge taken by a queen of France for a slighted passion, is as old as the story of Bellerophon, though it has been directly imitated by Boccaccio from that of Pier della Broccia and the Lady of Brabant in Dante. Another part of the tale has certainly been taken from the story of Antiochus and Stratonice.

9. In a company of Italian merchants, who happened to meet at Paris, Bernabo of Genoa boasts of the virtue of his wife Zineura. Provoked by the incredulity of Ambrogivolo, one of his companions, who was a contemner of female chastity, he bets five thousand florins against a thousand that Ambrogivolo will not seduce her affections in the space of three months, which he grants him for this

purpose. This scandalous wager being concluded, Ambrogivolo departs for Genoa. On his arrival at that place he hears such a report of the virtues of the lady in question, that he despairs of winning her affections, and therefore resolves to have recourse to stratagem, in order to gain the stake. Having bribed one of Zineura's attendants, he is concealed in a chest, and thus carried into the chamber of the lady. At night, while she is asleep, he possesses himself of some trinkets belonging to her, and also becomes acquainted with a particular mark on her left breast. Bernabo, by this deceit, being persuaded of the infidelity of his wife, pays the five thousand florins, and, advancing towards Genoa, despatches a servant avowedly to bring his wife to him, but with private instructions to murder her by the way. The servant, however, after he had found a proper place on the road for the execution of his purpose, agrees to spare her, on condition of her flying from the country; but he reports to his master that he had fulfilled his orders. In the disguise of a mariner, Zineura embarks in a merchant ship for Alexandria, where, after some time, she enters into the service of the soldan. She gains the confidence of her master in a remarkable degree, who, not suspecting her sex, sends her as captain of the guard which was appointed for the protection of the merchants at the fair of Acre. Here, among other toys, she sees the ornaments which had been stolen from her chamber, in possession of Ambrogivolo, who had come there to dispose of a stock of goods, and who relates to her, in confidence, the manner in which the trinkets had been obtained. The fair being over, she persuades him to accompany her to Alexandria. She also sends to Italy, and induces her husband, Bernabo, to come to settle in the same place. Then, in presence of her husband and the sultan, she makes Ambrogivolo confess his treachery, and discovers herself to be the unfortunate Zineura. The traitor is ordered to be fastened to a stake, and, being smeared with honey, is exposed naked to the gluttony of all the locusts of Egypt, while Bernabo, loaded with presents from the sultan, returns with his wife to Genoa.

This story has been regarded as one of the best in Boccaccio; it seems defective, how-



ever, in this, that the resentment we ought to feel at the conduct of the villain, is lost in indignation at the folly and baseness of the husband.

The above is the tale from which Pope imagined that Shakspeare had taken the principal plot of his *Cymbeline*. In the notes to Johnson's Shakspeare this is said to be a mistake ; and it is there asserted, that the story is derived from a collection of tales called *Westward for Smelts*, published in 1603, the second story of which is an imitation of Boccaccio's novel. But it seems more probable that the plot of *Cymbeline* was drawn directly from the original, or some translation of it, as the circumstances in the drama bear a much stronger resemblance to the Italian novel than to the English imitation. Thus Shakspeare's Jachimo, who is the Ambrogivolo of the *Decameron*, hides himself in a chest, but the villain in *Westward for Smelts* conceals himself below the lady's bed ; nor does he impress on his memory the appearance of the chamber and the pictures, as Ambrogivolo and Jachimo do, in order to give a stronger air of probability to their false relation. Lastly, in *Cymbeline* and the *Decameron* the imposition is aided by a circumstance that does not at all occur in *Westward for Smelts*. Both Ambrogivolo and Jachimo report to the husband that they have discovered a certain mark on the breast of the lady. "Ma niuno segnale," says the former, "da potere rapportare le vide, fuori che uno che ella n' havea sotto la sinistra poppa ; cio era un neo, dintorno al quale erano alquanti peluzzi biondi come oro ;" and Jachimo, when he has emerged from the trunk, finds, in the course of his examination,

On her left breast

A mole cinque spotted, like the crimson drops  
I' the bottom of a cowslip.—*Act II. Scene II.*

And again, when addressing Posthumus,

If you seek

For further satisfying, under her breast  
(Worthy the pressing) lies a mole, &c.

The incidents of the novel have been very closely adhered to by Shakspeare, but, as has been remarked by an acute and elegant critic, the scenes and characters have been most injudiciously altered, and the manners of a tradesman's wife, and two intoxicated Italian

merchants, have been bestowed on a great princess, a British hero, and a noble Roman. Those slight alterations that have been made do not seem to be improvements. In the *Decameron* the villain effects every thing by stratagem and bribery, but Jachimo is recommended by Posthumus to the princess. This loads the husband with additional infamy ; and, besides, it is not very probable that Imogen, who was strictly watched, should have been able to give audience to a stranger who came from the residence of her banished lord. In Boccaccio, Zineura prevails on the servant, by intercession, to allow her to escape, but this had been resolved on by the confident of Posthumus before he conveyed Imogen from her father's palace. This predetermined disobedience of the orders of his master gives rise to the very pertinent question of Imogen, to which no satisfactory answer is returned,

Wherefore then

Didst undertake it ? Why hast thou abused  
So many miles with a pretence ? This place ?  
Mine action, and thine own ? *our horses' labour ?*

After Imogen's life is spared, Shakspeare entirely quits the novel, and the remaining part of the drama, perhaps, does as little honour to his invention as the preceding scenes to his judgment. "To remark," says Johnson, "the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation."

10. Is Fontaine's *Calendrier des Viellards*. The concluding incident corresponds with one in the story *D'un Tailleur et de sa Femme*, in the *Contes Turcs*.

On the two following days, which were Friday and Saturday, no tales are related, as the first was revered on account of our Saviour's passion, and the second kept as a fast in honour of the Holy Virgin. The tales are therefore suspended till Sunday, and it is resolved that the company should remove to another palace in the neighbourhood, where suitable preparations had been made for their reception.

DAY III. commences with a description of the new abode to which the party had betaken



themselves. It was a sumptuous palace, seated on an eminence which rose in the middle of a plain. Here they found the spacious halls and ornamented chambers supplied with all things that could administer to delight. Below they noted the pleasant court, the cellars stored with the choicest wines, and the cool abundant springs of water which every where flowed. Thence they went to repose in a fair gallery which overlooked the court, and was decked with all the flowers and shrubs of the season. They next opened a garden which communicated with the palace. Around and through the midst of this paradise there were spacious walks, environed with vines, which promised a plenteous vintage, and, being then in blossom, spread so delicious an odour, that, joined with the other flowers then blowing in the garden, the fragrance rivalled the fresh spiceries of the east. The sides of the alleys were closed with jessamine and roses, forming an odoriferous shade that excluded not only the rays of the morning, but the mid-day beam. In the middle of this garden was a verdant meadow, spangled with a thousand flowers, and circled with orange trees whose branches, stored at once with blossoms and fruit, presented a refreshing object, and yielded grateful odour. A fountain of white marble, of wondrous workmanship, adorned the centre of this meadow, and from an image, standing on a column placed in the fountain, a jet of water spouted up, and again fell into the basin with a pleasing murmur. Those waters, which overflowed, were conveyed through the meadow by an unseen channel to irrigate all parts of the garden, and, again uniting, rushed in a full and clear current to the plain. This extraordinary garden was likewise full of all sorts of animals—the deer and goats grazed at their pleasure, or reposed on the velvet grass—the birds vied with each other in the various melody of their notes, and seemed to warble in response or emulation.

One of the sides of this fountain was selected as the most agreeable spot for relating the tales. It had been agreed that the subject should still be the mutability of fortune, and especially of those who had acquired, by their

diligence, something greatly wanted, or else recovered what they had lost.<sup>1</sup>

1. The gardener of a convent, which consisted of eight nuns and an abbess, gave up his employment; and, on returning to his native village, complained bitterly to Masetto, a young man of his acquaintance, of the small wages he had received, and also of the caprice of his mistresses. Masetto, so far from being discouraged by this account, resolves to obtain the situation. That he might not be rejected on account of his youth and good person, he feigns that he is dumb, and is readily engaged by the steward of the convent. For some time he cultivates the garden in a manner most consolatory to the eight nuns, and at length to the abbess herself; but one day, to their utter astonishment, he breaks silence, and complains of the *extra* labour imposed on him. A compromise, however, is made, and a partial remission of his multifarious duties acceded to on the part of the nuns. On the death of the steward, Masetto is chosen in his place; and it is believed in the neighbourhood that his speech had been restored by the prayers of the sisters to the tutelar saint to whose honour the monastery was erected.

This story is taken from the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, but Boccaccio has substituted an abbess and her nuns for a countess and her *camerarie*; thus, to the great scandal of Vannozzi, attributing to sacred characters what his predecessor had only ascribed to the profane.—“Attribuendo a persone sacre, il Boccaccio, quella colpa che dal suo anteriore fu ascritta a persone profane.”—*Miscel. Let.* vol. i. p. 580). The story in the *Decameron* is the *Mazet de Lamporechio* of Fontaine.

2. An equerry of Queen Teudelinda, the consort of Agiluf, king of the Lombards, falls in love with his mistress. Aware that he had nothing to hope from an open declaration of love, he resolves to personate the king, and thus gain access to the apartment of her majesty. King Agiluf resorted only during a certain part of the night to the chamber of the queen. The amorous groom procures a mantle similar to that in which Agiluf wrapt himself on these occasions; takes a torch and rod in his hand, as was his majesty's custom, and being farther aided by a strong personal resemblance, is readily admitted into the

<sup>1</sup> Di chi alcuna cosa molto da lui desiderata con industria acquistasse, o la perduta ricoverasse.



queen's apartment, where he represents his master. He had no sooner stolen back to his own bed, than he is succeeded by the king, who discovers what had happened, from his wife expressing her admiration at such a speedy return. His majesty instantly proceeds to the gallery where all his household slept, with the view of discovering the person who had usurped his place, from the palpitation of his heart. Fear and agitation betray the offender, and his master, that he might distinguish him in the morning, cuts off a lock of his hair above the ear. The groom, who knew the intent of this, escapes punishment by clipping, as soon as the king had departed, a corresponding lock from the heads of all his companions.

In the 40th chapter of the *Gesta Romanorum*, said to be from Macrobius, a wife's infidelity is discovered by feeling her pulse in conversation; but a story much nearer to that of Boccaccio occurs in Hebers' French metrical romance of the Seven Sages, though, I believe, it is not in the original *Syntipas*. The tale, however, has been taken immediately from the 98th of the *Cento Novelle Antiche*; and it has been imitated in turn in the *Muletier of Fontaine*. Giannone, in his *History of Naples*, has censured, not without some reason, the impertinence of Boccaccio in applying this story, without right, truth, or pretence, to the pious Queen Theudelinda:—"Principessa e per le eccelse doti del suo animo, e per la sua rada pieta dignissima di lode, e da annoverarsi fra le donne piu illustri del mondo, la quale non meritava esser posta in novella da Giovanni Boccaccio, nel suo Decamerone." (*Dell' Istoria civile di Napoli*, lib. 4. c. 5.)

3. A beautiful woman, who was the wife of a clothier in Florence, fell in love with a gentleman of the same city. In order to acquaint him with her passion, she sent for a friar who frequented his house, and, under pretence of confession, complained that this gentleman besieges her dwelling, lies in wait for her in the street, or ogles her from the opposite window, and concluded with begging the confessor to give him a rebuke. Next day the friar reprimanded his friend, who, being quick of apprehension, profited by the hint, and made love to the clothier's wife in

the manner pointed out in her counterfeit complaint, but had no opportunity to speak with her. The lady, to encourage him still farther, now presented him, by means of the priest, with a purse and girdle, which, she says, he had the audacity to send, but which her conscience will not allow her to keep. Lastly, she complained to her confessor, that her husband having gone to Genoa, his friend had entered the garden, and attempted to break in at the window, by ascending one of the trees. He was, as usual, rebuked by the priest, and having now fully learned his love lesson, he climbed one of the trees in the garden, and thus entered the casement, which was open to receive him.

This story is related in Henry Stephens' *Introduction to the Apology of Herodotus*. It is told of a lady of Orleans, who, in like manner, employed the intervention of her confessor to lure to her arms a scholar of whom she was enamoured. The tale of Boccaccio has suggested to Moliere his play *L'Ecole des Maris*, where Isabella enters into a correspondence, and at length effects a marriage with her lover, by complaining to her guardian Sganarelle in the same manner as the clothier's wife to her confessor. Otway's comedy of the *Soldier's Fortune*, in which Lady Dunce employs her husband to deliver the ring and letter to her admirer Captain Belguard, also derives its origin from the above tale in the *Decameron*.

4. Is a very insipid story.

5. Which is the *Magnifique of Fontaine*, has given rise to a drama by La Motte, and seems also to have suggested a scene in Ben Jonson's comedy, *The Devil is an Ass*, where Wittipol makes a present of a cloak to a husband for leave to pay his addresses to the wife for a quarter of an hour.

6. Richard Minutolo, a young man of rank and fortune in Naples, falls in love with Catella, the most beautiful woman in that city. Knowing her to be jealous of her husband, he pretends that he had discovered an intrigue between his own wife and her spouse, advising her, if she wish to ascertain his guilt, to repair next night to a bath where they had agreed to meet, and there personate the lady with whom her husband had the assignation. Having resolved to follow this counsel, Catella



is received, by Minutolo's contrivance, in a darkened apartment, where, after she had obtained full conviction of her husband's infidelity, she loads him with reproaches, but is much disconcerted, when expecting his apology, to receive amorous excuses from Minutolo.

I do not think this story occurs either in the selection of *Fabliaux* published by Barbazan or Le Grand, but I have little doubt that it exists among those which have not been brought to light. The incident has been a favourite one with subsequent novelists. For example, it corresponds with one of the tales of *Sacchetti*, and with the fourth of the *Fourth Decade of Cinthio*. It has also been versified by Fontaine, in his *Richard Minutolo*.

7 and 8. Are but indifferent stories. The last is the *Feronde ou le Purgatoire* of Fontaine, and has given rise to a comic scene in the *Fatal Marriage of Southern*, in which Fernando is made to believe that he had been dead, buried, and in purgatory—an incident omitted in this piece, as it has been altered for the stage by Garrick.

9. Giletta di Nerbona was daughter to the physician of the count of Roussillon, and almost from infancy had fixed her affections on Beltram, the count's son. On the death of his father this young man, as he had been left in charge to the king of France, repaired to the court at Paris, leaving Giletta much afflicted at his departure. Meanwhile, it was rumoured that the king had been seized with a dangerous malady, which baffled all the skill of his physicians: Giletta, who was anxious for a pretext to follow her beloved Beltram, set out for Paris, and as she had been instructed in the secrets of her father's art, succeeded in curing the king of the disorder with which he was afflicted. His majesty promised, as a recompense, to marry her to any one on whom she should fix, and she accordingly demanded Beltram of Roussillon as her husband. The count, disliking the marriage to which he was now constrained by the king, immediately after the celebration of the nuptials departed for Tuscany, and his bride returned to Roussillon, where she took the management of the estates of her husband. While in Tuscany, Beltram received a conciliatory message from Giletta, but replied to her emissaries, that he would

never treat her as his wife till she had a son by him, and obtained possession of a favourite ring which he constantly wore on his finger. To accomplish these conditions, the fulfilment of which the count considered as impossible, Giletta set out for Florence. On her arrival she learned that the count had fallen in love with a young woman of reduced circumstances in that town. Having made an arrangement with the mother of the girl, the count was given to understand that he would that night be received at the house of his mistress, if he previously sent her his ring as a proof of affection. This essential token having been obtained, Giletta next represented the young woman of whom the count was enamoured. Beltram soon after returned to his own estates, and Giletta, in due time, repaired to Roussillon, where she arrived during a great festival, and having presented her husband with his ring, and two sons to whom she had given birth, was acknowledged as countess of Roussillon.

In this tale Boccaccio has displayed considerable genius and invention, but it is difficult for the reader to reconcile himself to the character, or approve the feelings, of its heroine. Considering the disparity of rank and fortune, it was, perhaps, indelicate to demand as her husband, a man from whom she had received no declaration nor proof of attachment; but she certainly overstepped all the bounds of female decorum, in pertinaciously insisting on the celebration of a marriage to which he expressed such invincible repugnance. His submission was as mean as her obstinacy was ungenerous, especially as he had pre-determined to renounce and forsake her. After this forced and imperfect union, she thought herself entitled to take possession of the paternal inheritance of her husband, while she knew that he was wandering in a foreign land, and that she was the cause of his exile. The absurd conditions proposed by Beltram, are too evidently contrived for the sake of their completion. When Giletta arrives at Florence, in order to fulfil them, she finds not only that the indifference of the count continues, but that his affections are fixed on another object;—yet neither her pride nor jealousy are alarmed; she ingratiates herself with the family of a rival, and contrives



a stratagem, the success of which could have bound Beltram neither in law nor in honour. The triumph and coronet it procured must have been but a poor gratification, nor could she in any way have atoned for her preceding self-debasement, unless by renouncing all claim to her husband, or by conciliating his affections by her beauty or virtues.

Shakspeare has taken this story, with all its imperfections on its head, as the basis of his comedy, *All's Well that Ends Well*. It probably came to the dramatist through the medium of Painter's *Giletta of Narbon*, published in the *Palace of Pleasure*, 1569 (vol. i. p. 90). The preliminary circumstances are the same in the English comedy and Italian novel; but in the former the catastrophe has been much protracted. There Helena, who is the *Giletta* of the novel, after she had obtained one of her credentials, and put herself in the way of procuring the other, spreads, for no purpose, a report of her death: it is in consequence believed, that she had been murdered by her husband, and he is thrown into prison. We have also the useless additions of the newly projected marriage of the count with the daughter of a French nobleman, and the appearance of Diana, his Florentine flame, at court, in order to claim him as her husband. Shakspeare has also added, from his own imagination, his usual characters of a clown and a boasting coward. "The story," says Johnson, "of Bertram and Diana, had been told before of Mariana and Angelo, and, to confess the truth, scarcely merited to be heard a second time." This tale of Boccaccio has also formed the subject of one of the oldest Italian comedies, entitled *Virginia*, which was written by B. Accolti, and printed in 1513. The plot of this drama has been taken, with little variation, from Boccaccio, as appears from the argument prefixed:—

Virginia amando, el Re guarisce, e chiede  
Di Salerno el gran principe in marito ;  
Qual constrecto a sposarla, è poi partito  
Par mai tornar fin lei viva si vede :  
Cerca Virginia scrivendo mercede,  
Ma el principe da molta ira assalito  
Li domanda, s' a lei vuol sia redito,  
Dura condition qual impossibil crede.  
Pero Virginia, sola e travestita  
Partendo, ogni impossibil conditione  
Adempie al fin con prudentia infinita ;

Onde el Principe, pien d' admiratione,  
Lei di favore et gratia rivestita  
Sposa di nuovo con molta affectione.—

10. Cannot well be extracted. It is the *Diable en Enfer* of Fontaine.

It will have been remarked, that most of the stories in this Day relate to love intrigues, and are of a comic nature; those of

DAY IV. are for the most part tragic narratives concerning persons whose loves had an unfortunate conclusion.<sup>1</sup> This subject was suitable to the temper of Philostrato, the master of ceremonies for this day, who is represented as of a melancholy disposition, and as having been disappointed in love.

From the introduction to the Fourth Day, it would appear that the preceding part of the *Decameron* had been made public before the author advanced farther, as he takes pains to reply to the censures passed on him by certain persons who had perused his novels. He is particularly anxious to defend himself from the attacks made against him, on account of his frequent and minute details of love adventures, and the pains which he had taken to please the fair sex. In his vindication, he relates a story to show that the admiration of female beauty is implanted in the mind by the hand of nature, and cannot be eradicated by force of education. A Florentine, called Filippo Balducci, having lost his wife, renounced the world, and retired to Mount *Asinaio* with his son, who was only two years of age. Here the boy was brought up in fasting and prayer, saw no human being but his father, and heard of no secular pleasures. When he had reached the age of eighteen, the hermit, in his quest for alms, takes him to Florence, that he might afterwards know the road, should there be occasion to send him. This young man admires the palaces, and all the sights he beheld in that splendid city; but at length perceiving a troop of beautiful women, asks what they were. His father bids him cast down his eyes and not look at them, and being unwilling to term them by their proper name, added, that they were called goslings (*Papere*). The youth pays no farther attention to the other ornaments of Florence, but insists that he should be allowed

<sup>1</sup> Di coloro gli cui amori ebbero infelice fine.



to take a gosling with him to the hermitage.

This story is nearly the same with the 13th of the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, where a king's son having been confined from his infancy for ten years, without seeing the sun, on account of an astrological prediction, at the end of that period has all the splendid and beautiful objects of the universe placed before him, and among others a number of ladies, who were termed demons in the showman's nomenclature. Being asked which of all chiefly pleased him, he answers, that to him the demons were by far the most agreeable. This tale is in the *Seven Wise Masters of Hebers*: but it may be traced higher than either his metrical production, or the *Cento Novelle Antiche*. In one of the parables of the spiritual romance of Josaphat and Barlaam, we are told that a king had an only son, and it was declared by the physicians, as soon as he was born, that if allowed to see the sun or any fire, before he attained the age of twelve, he would become blind. The king commanded an apartment to be hewn within a rock, into which no light could enter. There he shut up the boy totally in the dark, but with proper attendants, for twelve years, at the end of which period he brought him forth from his gloomy chamber, and placed in his view women, gold, precious stones, rich garments, chariots of exquisite workmanship drawn by horses with golden bridles, heaps of purple tapestry, and armed knights on horseback. These were all distinctly pointed out to the youth, but being most pleased with the damsels, he desired to know by what name they were called. An attendant of the king jocosely told him, that they were devils who caught men. Being afterwards brought before his majesty, and asked which of all the fine things he had seen he liked best, he replied,—“Devils who catch men.”

After this introductory tale, Boccaccio commences the regular series of novels of the Fourth Day, which are the most mournful, and, I think, the least interesting in his work.

1. Ghismonda, only daughter and heiress of Tancred, Prince of Salerno, becomes enamoured of Guiscardo, one of her father's pages. She reveals her passion, and introduces him to her apartment, through a secret

grotto with which it communicated. During one of the interviews of the lovers, Tancred is accidentally concealed in the chamber of his daughter, and the unfortunate pair depart without suspecting that he had been witness to their crime. Next day the prince upbraids Ghismonda with her conduct. She returns a spirited answer, declaiming on the power of love, and the superiority of merit over the advantages of birth, in a tone of high and impassioned eloquence. In order to bring her to a more sober way of thinking, Tancred sends her Guiscardo's heart in a golden cup. The princess, aware of the fate he would undergo, had already distilled a juice from poisonous herbs, which she drinks off after having poured it on the heart of her lover.

In this tale, the violence of character attributed to Ghismonda may perhaps appear to be over-wrought; but she was precisely in that situation in which the soul acquires a supernatural strength, and the excessive severity of her father naturally turned into the channel of resistance those feelings, which might otherwise have fluctuated in remorse and in shame.<sup>1</sup>

No tale of Boccaccio has been so often translated and imitated as the above: it was translated into Latin prose by Leonard Aretine, into Latin elegiac verse by Filippo Berroald, the commentator on Apuleius, and into Italian ottava rima by Annibal Guasco de Alessandrus. It forms the subject of not fewer than five Italian tragedies; one of which, *La Gismonda*, obtained a momentary fame, from being falsely attributed by its real author to Torquato Tasso. An English drama by Robert Wilmot, which is also founded on this story, was acted before Queen Elizabeth at the Inner Temple, in 1568. (Dodsley's *Collection of Old Plays*, vol. ii.) The story appeared in French verse by Jean Fleury, and in the English octave stanza by William Walter, a poet of the reign of Henry VII. In this country it is best known through the *Sigismunda* and *Guiscardo* of Dryden. Mr Scott has remarked in his late edition of Dryden's works, “that the English poet has grafted one gross fault on his original, by representing the love of *Sigismunda*, as that of

<sup>1</sup> Scott's Dryden, vol. xi.



temperament, not of affection :” but then the English poet has sanctioned the union of the lovers by a marriage, private indeed and rapid, but which is altogether omitted in the *Decameron*. The old English ballad of Sir Cauline and the daughter of the King of Ireland,<sup>1</sup> has a strong resemblance to this novel of Boccaccio, in the secret meeting of the lovers, and discovery of their transgression; the catastrophe, however, is entirely different. The fine arts have also added lustre and celebrity to the tale. There is a beautiful painting attributed to Correggio, in which Sigismunda is represented weeping over the heart of her lover. It was this picture that Hogarth tried to copy and rival, an attempt for which he was severely ridiculed. “The Sigismunda of Hogarth,” says Horace Walpole, “is the representation of a maudlin strumpet, just turned out of keeping, with eyes red with rage, tearing off the ornaments her keeper had given her.”—See also Churchill’s *Epistle to Hogarth*.

2. The bad character of Alberto da Imola had become too notorious to allow him to remain in his native city. He therefore removed to Venice, the receptacle, as Boccaccio terms it, of all sorts of wickedness, where he became a friar, and soon fell in love with one of his penitents, the wife of a merchant, who was at that time from home. Having discovered her to be a woman of inordinate vanity, he informs her that the angel Gabriel had appeared to him, revealed the passion he had long entertained, and announced his intention of paying her an amatory visit, in any human shape she might command him to assume. Alberto at the same time prevails on her to give a preference to his figure. Accordingly, in the character of Gabriel, Alberto pays many visits to his mistress, but the lady at last boasts of her gallant to an acquaintance, by which means the report reaches her brothers, who resolve to intercept the archangel. At his next interview he is obliged to leave his wings behind him, and to leap over a window into a canal, whence he seeks refuge in a cottage in the neighbourhood. Next day his host, having discovered the story of the angel, informs

Alberto, that, at an ensuing festival, each citizen is to take some one dressed up as a bear, or wild man, to St Mark’s Place, as to a hunt, and that when the diversion is over, the conductor may lead away the person he brings to what quarter he pleases. Alberto, seeing no other mode of escaping unknown from Venice, resolves to attend his host in the disguise of a savage. On the appointed day he is accordingly brought forth in this equipment, but his treacherous friend pulls off his vizard in the most public part of the city, and proclaims him to be the pretended angel. He is in consequence pursued by the hue and cry of the mob, and the intelligence having at last reached the brothers of the deluded lady, he is thrown into prison, where he soon after dies.

The numerous tales founded on that species of seduction, practised by Alberto da Imola, may have originated in the incident related in all the romances concerning Alexander the Great, where Nectanebus predicts to Olimpias, that she is destined to have a son by Ammon, and afterwards enjoys the queen under the appearance of that divinity. But they have more probably been derived from the story related by Josephus (lib. 18. c. 13), of Mundus, a Roman knight, in the reign of Tiberius, who, having fallen in love with Paulina, wife of Saturninus, bribed a priestess of Isis, to whose worship Paulina was addicted, to inform her that the god Anubis, being enamoured of her charms, had desired her to come to him. In the evening she accordingly proceeded to the temple, where she was met by Mundus, who personated the Egyptian divinity. Next morning she boasted of her interview with Anubis to all her acquaintance, who suspected some trick of priestcraft; and the deceit having come to the knowledge of Tiberius, he ordered the temple of Isis to be demolished, and her priests to be crucified. Similar deceptions are also common in eastern stories. Thus, in the *History of Malek*, in the *Persian Tales*, the adventurer of that name, under the resemblance of Mahomet, seduces the princess of Gazna. A fraud of the nature employed by Alberto da Imola is frequent in the French novels and romances, as in *L’Amant Salamandre*, and the *Sylph Husband of Marmontel*. It is also said to have been oftener

<sup>1</sup> Percy’s *Relics*, vol. i. p. 50.



than one practised in France in real life, as appears from the well-known case of Father Girard and Miss Cadiere.

The six following tales are of a melancholy description. They seem for the most part to have had some foundation in real incidents, which occurred a short while previous to the age of the author, but the details by which they are accompanied, exhibit wonderful knowledge of the heart, and contain many simple touches of natural and picturesque beauty.

9. Two noble gentlemen, who were intimate friends, lived in neighbouring castles in Provence. The name of the one was Gulielmo Rossilione, and of the other, Gulielmo Guardastagno. At length the former suspecting that a criminal intercourse subsisted between his wife and the latter, sent to invite him to his residence, but way-laid and murdered him in a wood, through which the road between the two castles passed. He then opened the breast of his victim, drew out his heart, and carried it home wrapped up in the pennon of his lance. When he alighted from his horse, he gave it to the cook as the heart of a wild boar, commanded him to dress it with his utmost skill, and serve it up to supper. At table the husband pretended want of appetite, and the lady swallowed the whole of the monstrous repast. When not a fragment was left, he informed her that she had feasted on the heart of Guardastagno. The lady, declaring that no other food should ever profane the relics of so noble a knight, threw herself from a casement which was behind her, and was dashed to pieces by the fall.

Some commentators on Boccaccio have believed this tale to be taken from the well-known story of Raoul de Couci, who, while dying of wounds received at the siege of Acre, ordered his heart to be conveyed to his mistress, the Lady of Fayel: but this singular present being intercepted in the way, was dressed by command of the exasperated husband, and presented at table to his wife, who, having incautiously partaken of it, vowed never to receive any other nourishment. This incident is related in a chronicle of the time of Philip Augustus, printed by Fauchet in his *Recueil de l'Origine de la Langue et Poesie Françoise, Ryme et Romans*, 1581, 4to, p.

124. But, as Boccaccio himself informs the reader, that his tale is given according to the relation of the Provenzals (*Secondo de che raccontano i Provenzali*), it seems more probable that it is taken from the story of the Provençal poet Cabestan, which is told by Nostradamus in his *Lives of the Troubadours*. Besides, the story of Cabestan possesses a much closer resemblance to the novel of Boccaccio, than the fiction concerning Raoul de Couci and the Lady of Fayel; indeed, it precisely corresponds with the Decameron, except in the names, and in the circumstance that the lady stabs herself instead of leaping from the window. The incident is also told by Vellutello, in his commentary on Petrarch, who mentions Cabestan in the 4th part of his *Triumph of Love*. Crescimbeni, too, in his annotations on Nostradamus, informs us that he has seen a MS. life of Cabestan in the Vatican, which corresponds in every particular, except the names, with the tale of Boccaccio. Rolland, in his *Recherches sur les prerogatives des dames chez les Gaulois*, reports, that Cabestan having gained a cause before the court of love, by the eloquence of his advocate the Lady of Raymond of Rossilione, he was allowed to kiss his beautiful counsel by decree of the court. His insisting on this privilege is assigned by the authors, whom Rolland cites, as the principal cause of the atrocious deed that followed. The story, as related in Nostradamus, occurs in the French tales of Jeanne Flore, where there is this epitaph on the lovers.

O toi, qui passes sur ces bords,  
Apprends que ce tombeau recele  
Un couple amoureux et fidele,  
Et deux coeurs dans un meme corps.

The novels of this day, it has been seen, principally consist of the relation of violent attachments, which terminated fatally. In those of

DAY V. There are chiefly recounted love adventures, which, after unfortunate vicissitudes, come to a happy conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

1. In the island of Cyprus lived a rich man, called Aristippus, to whom fortune had been in every respect favourable, except that one

<sup>1</sup> Di cio che ad alcuno amante, dopo alcuni fieri o sventurati accidenti, felicemente avvenisse.



of his sons, though handsome in person, was afflicted with the utmost imbecility of mind. His real name was Galeso, but, on account of his stupidity, he was called Cimon, which, in the language of the country, signified beast. The father, despairing of his improvement, sent him to a country seat, to live with slaves and labourers, to the infinite satisfaction of Cimon. After he had remained there for some time, it chanced that one day, while wandering through a thicket, he perceived a beautiful young woman asleep by the side of a fountain: he long gazed in stupid admiration, and when she awakened he conducted her home; but after this he returned not to the farm, but to his father's mansion. Love, in piercing his heart, effected what had been in vain attempted by his instructors; he applied himself assiduously to study, and in the space of four years became a profound philosopher, and an accomplished gentleman. At the end of this period he asked Iphigenia (for that was the name of the young lady whose beauty had performed such wonders) in marriage from her father, but learned that she had been affianced to Pasimunda, a young man of Rhodes. Cimon waited for the time when she was to sail for that island. He then armed a ship, manned it with some of his companions, and attacked the vessel which conveyed Iphigenia to her intended husband. Having obtained possession of his mistress, he set sail with her for Crete; but a storm having arisen, he was forced into a bay in the island of Rhodes, where his ship was recognised by the sailors of the vessel he had so lately attacked. Cimon and his friends were in consequence cast into prison, where they remained, while preparations were making for the nuptials of Pasimunda with Iphigenia, and also of a brother of Pasimunda with Cassandra, a young lady of Rhodes. Now Lisimachus, the chief magistrate of the island, happened to be enamoured of Cassandra, and resolved to carry her off by force. Having accordingly prepared a vessel, he associated Cimon in his enterprise. These lovers accordingly attacked the house of Pasimunda, during the celebration of the marriage, and having murdered the bridegrooms, they sailed with the brides for the island of Crete. There they remained till the matter was hushed up,

when Lisimachus returned to Rhodes with Cassandra, and Cimon carried Iphigenia to Cyprus.

In this novel, which is one of those that have added most to the reputation of the Decameron, the author's object seems to have been to exhibit an example of the power of the gentler affections, in refining the human mind. Such a picture would have been more pleasing, though perhaps less natural, than the representation actually given of the transition from an idiot to a ruffian: For it cannot be denied, that the expedients by which Cimon gets possession of a woman, who felt for him no reciprocal attachment, are merely rape and murder. It has also been well remarked,<sup>1</sup> that the continuation of the narrative bears no reference to the sudden reformation of Cimon, the striking and original incident with which the tale commences. Cimon might have carried off Iphigenia, and all the changes of fortune which afterwards take place might have happened, though his love had commenced in an ordinary manner; nor is there any thing in his character, or mode of conduct, that remind us he is such a miraculous instance of the power of love. In short, in the progress of the tale, we entirely lose sight of its striking commencement, nor do we receive much compensation by the introduction of the new actor, Lisimachus, with whose passion, disappointment, and final success we feel little sympathy.

It has been supposed that the original idea of Cimon's conversion is to be found in an Idyllium of Theocritus, entitled *Βυκολισκος*; but it is hardly possible that the novelist could have seen Theocritus at the date of the composition of the Decameron. Boccaccio himself affirms, that he had read the account in the ancient histories of Cyprus; and Beroaldus, who translated this novel into Latin, also acquaints us that it is taken from the annals of the kingdom of Cyprus,—a fact which that writer might probably have ascertained from his intimacy with Hugo IV., king of that island.

Besides this version by Beroaldus, the above story was translated into stanzas of English verse about the year 1570, and has also been

<sup>1</sup> Scott's Dryden, vol. xi.



imitated in his Cimon and Iphigenia by Dryden, who has in some degree softened the crimes of Cimon, by representing Iphigenia as attached to him, and disinclined to a marriage with the Rhodian; which is the reverse of the sentiments she feels in the original. This tale has also formed the subject of a celebrated musical entertainment.

3. Though an insipid story in itself, is curious, as presenting us with the rudiments of a modern romance, of the school of Mrs Radcliffe.

4. Lizio da Valbona, a gentleman of Romagna, had a daughter called Caterina, who, on pretence that she could not sleep in her own apartment, from the sultriness of the weather, insists with her parents on having a bed prepared in a gallery, which communicated with the garden, that she might be refreshed by breathing cool air, and listening to the song of the nightingale. All this was a stratagem, that she might procure an interview with a young man, called Manardi, of whom she was enamoured. Towards morning the lovers fall asleep, and are thus discovered by the father, who comes to inquire if the song of the nightingale had contributed to his daughter's repose. He gives the choice of instant death, or a legal union with Caterina, to Manardi, who prefers the latter alternative.

The characters in this tale are mentioned by Dante in his Purgatory. A Spirit, complaining of the degeneracy of the Italians, exclaims

“ Ov' é 'l Buon Lizio e Arrigo Manardi.—C. 14.

This demonstrates the existence of these persons, whence Manni in his Commentary infers, according to his usual process of reasoning, that the incident related by Boccaccio must have actually occurred. In fact, however, it is derived from one of the ancient Armorican tales of Marie, entitled *Lai de Laustic*, which, in the Breton language, signified a nightingale. There a lady, during the warm nights of summer, used to leave her husband's side, and repair to a balcony, where she remained till dawn of day, on pretence of being allured by the sweet voice of the nightingale: but, in reality, to enjoy the society of a lover, who resided in the neighbourhood.

I know of no version or imitation of this tale of Boccaccio, except Le Rossignol, usually published in the *Contes et Nouvelles* of Fontaine, and written in his manner, but of which I believe he was not the author.

5. This story is related by Tonducci, in his *History of Faenza*, and it had been formerly told in an old Latin chronicle. The Italian writers think that it would form a fine subject for the plot of a comedy, and it no doubt bears a considerable resemblance to the incidents in the plays of Terence, as also to the *Incognito* of Goldoni.

6. Seems partly an historical tale; it is uninteresting in itself, but contains an incident which appears to have suggested to Tasso the punishment of Olindo and Sophronia, who are tied back to back to a stake, and are about to be burned in this posture, when rescued by the arrival and intercession of Clorinda. In the Decameron, Gianni di Procida being detected in an intrigue with a young lady, of whom he had been formerly enamoured, but who was then the mistress of Frederic, King of Sicily, the criminals are sentenced to be consumed, while tied to a stake, in a similar position with the lovers in the Jerusalem. But when they were already bound, and when the faggots were about to be lighted, they were delivered by the unexpected coming of Ruggiera dell Oria, the high admiral, who intercedes for them with the king. The desire, too, expressed by the lover in the Decameron, of a change of position, has been beautifully imitated by the Italian poet. Gianni di Procida exclaims, when the sentence is about to be executed,—“ Io veggio, che io debbo, e tostamente morire; voglio adunque di gracia, che come io son con questa giovane, con le reni a lei voltato, e ella a me, che noi siamo co 'visi l'uno all' altro rivolti; accioche morendo io, vedendo il viso suo, ne possa andar consolato.”

In like manner Olindo calls out in the crisis of his fate,—

“ Ed Oh mia morte avventurosa appieno,  
Oh fortunati miei dolci martiri,  
S' impetrero che giunto seno'a seno  
L'anima mia ne la tua bocca io spiri!  
E venendo tu meco a un tempo meno  
In me fuor mandi gli ultimi sospiri.”

*Gerus, Lib. c. 2.*



7. Amerigo de Trapani, who lived in the time of the good King William of Sicily, purchased for his service a number of slaves, out of a Genoese vessel which had just returned from the coast of Armenia. One of these, called Theodore, at that time almost a child, became, as he grew up, a great favourite of Amerigo; was released from a servile condition, and at length admitted to his master's table. Violante, the daughter of Amerigo, falls in love with him, and is soon in a situation which requires retirement. She is accordingly sent by her mother to a country seat belonging to the family, but without her father's knowledge of the cause. He discovers the truth, however, by going to this villa at a most critical moment, and compels his daughter to reveal the name of the father of the child to which she was giving birth. At his return to the city, Amerigo procures sentence of death to be passed on Theodore, and despatches a confidential assassin to his daughter, with the choice of a dagger or phial of poison. Theodore, on his way to the place of execution, is recognised as his son by an Armenian ambassador, then residing in Sicily, who procures his pardon, on condition that he should espouse the lady whom he had seduced. Her lover then hastens to the country seat, and fortunately arrives before his mistress had been compelled to make choice of dying by the poison or dagger. Such marvellous recognisances as that in the above novel were frequent in old stories. The tale is in itself indifferent, and is chiefly curious, as being the foundation of the plot of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Triumph of Love*, the second and best of their *Four Plays in One*. The drama, however, only commences when the lady is on the verge of her *accouchement*. A rival is also conjured up to the lover Girard, in the person of his brother, and both at length prove to be children of the Duke of Milan.

8. Nastagio, a young man of great wealth in the city of Ravenna, was deeply enamoured of a lady of the family of Traversari, who rejected his proposals of marriage, and treated him with much harshness and disdain. As he was in danger of consuming his fortune in fruitless attempts to soften her cruelty, he is advised by his friends to travel to some distant country, with a view of extinguishing

his passion. After making preparations, as for a long journey, he leaves Ravenna, but proceeds no farther than his country seat at Chiassi, which was about three miles distant from the city. One day during his residence there, while wandering through a wood, lost in deep meditation, he is surprised by the uncouth spectacle of a lady in total dishabille, flying through the thickets with dreadful screams, pursued by two hounds and a grisly knight, who rode on a black steed, and bore a drawn sword in his hand. Nastagio attempts to oppose this unhandsome procedure, but is warned by the huntsman not to impede the course of divine justice. The knight then reveals to Nastagio, that, in despair at that lady's cruelty whom he was now pursuing, he had slain himself with the sword he held in his hand, and that his mistress dying soon after, she was condemned to be hunted down in this manner every Friday, for a long course of years, by her rejected lover. By this time the visionary victim is overtaken by the mastiffs. She is pierced with the rapier by the knight, her heart is torn out, and is immediately devoured by the dogs. As soon as she is completely dismembered, she starts up as if she had sustained no injury, and again flies before her infernal pursuer. Nastagio resolves to turn this goblin scene to his advantage;—he asks his stubborn mistress and her family to dine with him on the following Friday, and the invitation being accepted, he prepares an entertainment in the grove where he had witnessed the supernatural tragedy. Towards the end of the repast the troop of spirits appear, and the avenging knight relates his story to the terrified assembly. The lady, in particular, appalled at this dreadful warning, accepts the hand of her formerly rejected lover.

We are informed in a note, by the persons employed for the correction of the *Decameron*, that this tale is taken, with a variation merely in the names, from a chronicle written by Helinandus, a French monk of the 13th century, which comprises a history of the world from the creation to the author's time.

This story, which seems to be the origin of all retributory spectres, was translated in 1569 into English verse, by Christopher Tye, under the title of "*A Notable Historye of Nastagio*



and Traversari, no less pitiefull than pleasaunt." He has chosen the psalm measure which he used in paraphrasing the Acts of the Apostles :—

"He sawe approche with swiftie foot  
The place where he did staye,  
A dame with scattered heares untrussed,  
Bereft of her araye.  
Besides all this two mastiffs great," &c.

It is not impossible that such old translations, now obselete and forgotten, may have suggested to Dryden's notice those stories of Boccaccio which he has chosen. Sigismunda and Guiscard, as well as Cimon and Iphigenia, had appeared in old English rhyme before they received embellishment from his genius. In his Theodore and Honoria he has adorned the above story with all the charms of versification, and converted what he found an idle tale, into a beautiful poem. The supernatural agency, as well as the feelings of those present at Nastagio's entertainment, are managed with wonderful skill, and it seems on the whole the best executed of the three novels which he has selected from the Decameron.

9. Is the Faucon of Fontaine. Of this story it has been remarked, "that as a picture of the habitual workings of some one powerful feeling, where the heart reposes almost entirely on itself, without the violent excitement of opposing duties or untoward circumstances, nothing ever came up to the story of Federico and his Falcon. The perseverance in attachment, the spirit of gallantry and generosity displayed in it, has no parallel in the history of heroical sacrifices. The feeling is so unconscious too and involuntary, is brought out in such small, unlooked-for, and unostentatious circumstances, as to show it to have been woven into the very nature and soul of the author."

10. Part of this tale, which cannot be extracted, is taken from the 9th book of Apuleius. It also bears a strong resemblance to the 31st and 33d novels of Girolamo Morlini.

The tales in

DAY VI. principally consist of bon mots, repartees, or ready answers, which relieve

<sup>1</sup> Di chi con alcuno leggiadro motto tentato si riscotesse; o con pronta risposta o avedimento, fuggissi perdita, pericolo, o scorno.

from some danger or embarrassment ;<sup>1</sup> thus, for instance, in the

4. Currado, a citizen of Florence, having one day taken a crane with his hawk, sent it to his cook to be dressed for supper. After it had been roasted, the cook yielded to the importunities of one of his sweethearts and gave her a leg of the crane. His master is greatly incensed at seeing the bird served up in this mutilated form. The cook being sent for, excuses himself by asserting that cranes have only one leg. On hearing this Currado is still farther exasperated, and commands him to produce a live crane with only one leg, or expect the severest punishment. Next morning the cook, accompanied by his master, sets out in quest of this *rara avis*, trembling all the way with terror, and fancying every thing he sees to be a crane with two legs. At length he is relieved from his anxiety, when, coming to a river, he perceives a number of cranes standing on the brink on one leg, the other being drawn in, as is their custom. "Now, master," says he, "look at these; did not I speak truth?" "Stay a while," replies Currado, and then riding nearer, he cries out, "Shough! Shough!" with all his might, on which they flew away with both legs extended. "What say you now, have they not two legs?" "Yes, yes," answered the cook, "but you did not shout out last night to the crane that was at supper, as you have done to these, or questionless it would have put down its other leg like its fellows."

10. Is the only tale of this day which does not consist in a mere expression. Friar Cipolla, of the order of St Anthony, was accustomed to go once a year to Certaldo, to gather contributions. In this he was usually very successful, owing to the wealth and credulity of the people of that district. While there, as usual, in the month of August, he took an opportunity one Sunday morning, when all the inhabitants were assembled to hear mass, to solicit their attendance on the following day at the church-door, to contribute their mite to the poor brethren of St Anthony. He also informed them he would preach a sermon, and exhibit a most precious relic—a feather of the angel Gabriel, which he had dropped in the chamber of the Virgin, when



he came to her at the annunciation in Nazareth. The friar, being of a jovial disposition, had two bottle companions in Certaldo, who happened to be present, and resolved to play him some mischief. As he went abroad to dinner that day, they easily got access to his room, where they found a wallet, and in it a casket wrapped up in silk, which contained the feather of a parrot, a bird at that time scarcely known in Italy. They carried off this feather, which was intended to pass for that of the angel, and, substituting some coals in its place, left all things apparently as they had found them. Next day an immense multitude being assembled, the friar sent for his wallet: having commenced his sermon, he discoursed at great length on the wonders of the relic he possessed, but when he came to the exhibition, he was somewhat disconcerted at finding the coals in place of the feather; yet, without changing countenance, he shut the casket, and exclaimed, "May the power of God be praised!" Then addressing his audience, he informed them that in his youth he had been sent by his superior into the east. He gave a long account of his travels as far as India, and told how on his return he had visited the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had shown him innumerable relics: among others, a lock of the hair of the seraph that appeared to St Francis, a paring of the cherub's nail, a few of the rays of the blessed star that guided the Magi in the east, a vial filled with the sweat which dropped from St Michael when he combated with the devil, the jaw-bone of Lazarus, &c. But of all the relics, he had chiefly admired the feather of the angel Gabriel, and the coals that roasted St Lawrence, with which the patriarch had in consequence been pleased to present him. These holy gifts had been packed up in caskets resembling each other, and it had been the will of God to bring the one which contained the coals, instead of that with the feather; but the substitution, he continued, was a fortunate thing for Certaldo, for whoever was marked by these coals with the sign of the cross, would be secure against injury by fire for the rest of the year. The credulous multitude were satisfied with this explanation, and contributed a large sum to be signed with the imaginary relics.

This tale of Boccaccio drew down the censure of the Council of Trent, and is the one which gave greatest umbrage to the church. The author has been defended by his commentators, on the ground that he did not intend to censure the respectable orders of friars, but to expose those wandering mendicants who supported themselves by imposing on the credulity of the people; that he did not mean to ridicule the sacred relics of the church, but those which were believed so in consequence of the fraud and artifice of monks.

In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* there is a similar satire on ludicrous relics. The *Pardonere*, who had just arrived from Rome, carried in his wallet, along with other treasures of a like description, part of the sail of St Peter's ship, and the veil of the Virgin Mary:—

"And with these reliques, whanne that he fond  
A poure persone dwelling up on lond,  
Upon a day he gat him more moneie  
Than that the persone gat in monethes tweie."

A catalogue of relics, rivalling in absurdity those of Chaucer's *Pardonere*, or Boccaccio's *Cipolla*, is presented in Sir David Lindsay's *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*. In the 38th chapter of Stephens' *Apology for Herodotus*, we are told that a priest of Genoa returning from the Levant, boasted that he had brought from Bethlehem the breath of our Saviour in a vial, and from Sinai the horns which Moses wore when he descended from that mountain. If we may believe the *Colloquia Mensalia* of Luther, that great reformer told that the Bishop of Mentz pretended to possess the flames of the bush which Moses beheld burning!

The sixth day concludes with a description of a valley, in which the ladies pass some part of the day. It was of a circular form, encompassed by six hills, on each of which stood a palace built in form of a castle. Those sides that sloped to the south, were covered with vines, olives, and every species of fruit-tree; those that looked towards the north, were planted with oaks and ashes. The vale itself was full of cypress trees and laurels, through which no sunbeam could dart on the flower-spangled ground. But what was chiefly delightful, a stream issued through a valley



which divided two of the hills, and, rushing over a rock, made an agreeable murmur, while the drops that were sprinkled shone to the eye like silver; it thence flowed in a clear and tranquil channel, till it was at length received into a pebbly bason in the midst of the plain.

DAY VII. Is appropriated to stories of tricks or stratagems, which women from love, or for their own security, have put on their husbands, whether they were detected or not.<sup>1</sup>

2. A young woman of Naples brought a gallant to her house one morning, while her husband was out at work. The object of the lover's visit was not accomplished when the husband unexpectedly returned; he knocked at the door, which he found bolted, and internally commended his wife for her vigilance and sobriety. She, on hearing him at the entrance, conceals the young man in a tub, and running down to meet her husband, upbraids him with his idleness. He answers, that he had forgotten it was the festival of St Galeone, but that she would not want for bread, as he had disposed of the tub since he went out for five shillings (*Gigliate*). The wife, with great readiness, says she had just sold it for seven. On hearing these words, the gallant instantly throws himself out of the vat, assumes the character of the purchaser, and agrees to take it at the price mentioned, provided it be first well scoured. The husband gets into the barrel, in order to scrub it, and while he was thus occupied—

Notre couple, ayant repris courage,  
Reprit aussi le fil de l'entretien.

This tale has been translated by Boccaccio from a story which may be found near the beginning of the ninth book of Apuleius. It is the *Cuvier of Fontaine*.

3. Is one of a good many novels in the Decameron, in which married women are seduced by monks, who were godfathers to their children (*compare*); — a connexion which in Italy seems to have given access to the bosom of families, and placed familiarity beyond suspicion.

<sup>1</sup> Delle beffe, lequali o per amore, o per salvamento di loro, le donne hanno già fatte a suoi mariti senza essersene adveduti, o sì.

4. A rich man in Arezzo is jealous of his wife. She contrives to make him habitually drunk at night, and while he is thus intoxicated she goes out to a gallant. At length the husband distrusting her motives, in thus encouraging his evil propensity, pretends on one occasion to be drunk when perfectly sober. His wife went abroad according to custom; but when she returns she finds the door locked, and on her husband refusing to open it, throws a stone into a well. The man thinking she had drowned herself, and fearing that he might be accused of the murder, runs to her assistance. Meanwhile she gets into the house, and shuts him out in return. She loads him with abuse, and a crowd being gathered, he is exposed as a dissipated wretch to all his neighbours, and among others to the relations of his wife. This tale is the origin of the *Calandra* of the Cardinal Bibbiena, the best comedy that appeared in Italy previous to the time of Goldoni: it also forms the ground-work of one of Dancourt's plays, and probably suggested to Moliere the plot of his celebrated comedy, *George Dandin*. The story, however, had been frequently told before the time of Boccaccio, being one of the *Fabliaux* of the *Trouveurs*, published by Le Grand (vol. iii. p. 143). It appears in the still more ancient tales of Petrus Alphonsus, which have been so frequently mentioned, and in one of the French versions of *Dolopatos*, or the *Seven Wise Masters*. It does not occur, however, in *Syntipas*, the Greek form of that romance, nor in the French version of *Hebers*, but only in that of the anonymous *Trouveur*.

5. A merchant in Ariminio being immoderately jealous of his wife, confines her closely at home in the most grievous restraint. She contrives, nevertheless, to enter into correspondence with a young man, called Philip, who lived in the adjoining building, by means of a chink in the partition between a retired part of her own house and Philip's chamber. On the day before the Christmas festival, the lady informs the merchant that she means to go on the following morning to church, to confess her sins to a priest. Her husband inquires what sins she has to acknowledge. She replies that she has a great many, but that she would reveal them to no other than a priest. This mystery inflaming the jealousy



of the husband, he repairs to the church where his wife intended to confess; having agreed with the chaplain, he puts on the disguise of a friar, and is ready on the following morning to receive the expected penitent. The lady instantly recognizes her husband, but, dissembling her knowledge, feigns a story that she is beloved by a priest, who comes to her every night while her husband is asleep, and that he possesses a power which neither locks nor bolts can resist. That evening the husband tells his wife he is going abroad to supper, but lies in wait all night in a ground room, to observe the expected coming of the priest. While thus employed, the lady introduces her lover by the secret way into her chamber. The same thing is repeated during a number of nights; but the husband at length, tired with watching, insists on learning the name of the priest of whom she is enamoured. His wife then cures him of jealousy, by assuring him that she had discovered his stratagem, and that he was the priest to whom she alluded in her confession.

This story seems to have been suggested by the *Fabliau*, *Du Chevalier qui confessa sa femme*. There a lady being sick, shows a most earnest desire to see a confessor. Her husband wondering at this anxiety, disguises himself as a priest, and hears a confession of an intrigue with his nephew, who lived in the house. He immediately turns his relative out of doors, and on her recovery reproaches his wife with her conduct. She replies, laughing, that she had detected his trick, and had taken that mode of at once avenging herself for such injurious suspicions, and of getting rid of his nephew, who was burdensome to the family. It is not easy to understand, from the abridgment of *Le Grand*, whether this explanation was an ingenious device on the part of the lady to conceal her gallantries, or whether she had really acted from the motives she avowed. The modern imitations correspond more closely with the *Decameron* than with the original *Fabliau*. In the 78th of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, entitled *Le Mari Confesseur*, a lady, who is confessed by her husband in the disguise of a priest, acknowledges a criminal intercourse with a squire, a knight, and a priest. On hearing this the husband bursts out into an indignant excla-

mation. "Were you not," says she, with some presence of mind, "a squire when I married you, were you not afterwards a knight, and are you not now a priest?" This is copied by *Fontaine* in *Le Mari Confesseur*. In *Bandello* (Nov. 9, par. 1.) the husband suborns the priest to hear the confession of his wife, and stabs her on its being reported to him, which cuts out the ingenuity and readiness of the wife's reply. "Compare," says *Le Grand*, in a tone of exultation, "this Italian story of assassination with the French *Fabliau*, and see with what truth nations unintentionally paint their manners." *Malespini*, however, though an Italian novelist, has adhered in his 92d tale to the incidents of the *Fabliau*. In the tales of *Doni*, the wife has an intrigue with a page during her husband's absence. Being detected by a neighbouring baron, she bribes him to silence by granting him the same favours; she again permits herself to be discovered by a priest, and purchases secrecy by a similar compliance: she is confessed by her husband on his return, and having inadvertently acknowledged her triple transgression, she gets off by reminding her husband, that though now a baron, he had been formerly the king's page, and was at that moment a priest.

6. The wife of a Florentine gentleman had two lovers. To the one, called *Leonetto*, she was much attached; but the other, *Lambertuccio*, only procured her good-will by the power which he possessed, in consequence of his high rank and influence, of doing her injury. While residing at a country seat, the husband of this lady left her for a few days, and on his departure she sent for *Leonetto* to bear her company. *Lambertuccio* also hearing of the absence of the husband, came to the villa soon after the arrival of her favoured lover. Scarcely had *Leonetto* been concealed, and *Lambertuccio* occupied his place, when the husband unexpectedly knocked at the outer gate. At the earnest entreaty of his mistress, *Lambertuccio* runs down with a drawn sword in his hand, and rushes out of the house, exclaiming, "If ever I meet the villain again!"—*Leonetto* is then brought forth from concealment, and the husband is informed, and believes, that he had sought refuge in his villa from the fury of *Lamber-*



tuccio, who, having met him on the road, had pursued him with an intention of putting him to death.

The original of this story is a tale in the Greek Syntipas, the most ancient European form of the Seven Wise Masters, but it has been omitted in some of the more modern versions. In Syntipas, a Greek officer having an intrigue with a married woman, sends his slave to announce his intention of paying her a visit. The lady, however, is so much pleased with the messenger, that she receives him in place of his master; and the officer, becoming impatient at the delay, proceeds without farther ceremony to the house of his mistress. On his sudden approach, the lady has just time to conceal the slave, and then to receive her lover with assumed delight. While occupied with him, the husband knocks at the gate. Hearing this the lady places a drawn sword in the hand of her lover, and directs him to rush out, venting loud execrations. Having complied with her injunction, she informs the husband that he had come to the house in a paroxysm of fury, in search of a slave who had sought shelter with her, and whom, from principles of humanity, she had concealed from his resentment. After seeing the officer far off, the husband draws forth the young slave from his concealment, assuring him he need be under no further apprehensions, as his master was already at a great distance. (*Mem. de M. Dacier dans Les Mem. des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, vol. xli.*) In the Tales of Petrus Alphonsus there is a similar story of a mother, who puts a sword into the hand of her daughter's gallant, and persuades the husband that he had fled to the house to seek refuge from the pursuit of assassins. There are corresponding stories in *Le Grand's Fabliaux* (IV. p. 160); *Bandello* (N. 11); and *Parabosco* (N. 16). One or other of these tales suggested a part of Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of *Women Pleased* (act ii. scene 6), where Isabella in a similar manner conveys two lovers out of her chamber, when surprised by the coming of her husband.

7. A young man of fortune in France, of the name of Lewis, repaired to Bologna, from a desire to see a lady, called Beatrice, whom he had heard mentioned as the finest woman in the world. He found that her beauty ex-

ceeded even his high expectations, and he became so deeply enamoured, that, with the view of being constantly near her person, he engaged himself as an attendant to her husband. In a short while he proved so acceptable to his master, that he was looked on more as a friend than domestic. One day, on which the husband was abroad hawking, Lewis, while playing at chess with his mistress, revealed his passion, acquainted her with his rank in life, and with all he had done for her sake. The lady took the bold step of desiring him to come at midnight to the apartment in which she slept with her husband. Thither Lewis repaired at the appointed hour, quite uncertain by what means the lady intended to gratify his passion. He was accordingly much dismayed when, on approaching the side of the bed where the lady was, she awakened her husband, and informed him that his servant Lewis had made offer to her of his love, and that if he wished to be satisfied of the truth of her assertion, he might dress himself in her clothes, and go to the pine-tree in the garden, where, in order to secure his conviction, she had agreed to meet him. The credulous husband set out on this errand; Lewis remained some time with the lady, and then, at her suggestion, went down to the garden with a cudgel in his hand, which he exercised on the husband, feigning to believe that he is punishing the wife, and reviling her all the while for her infidelity. After this the sufferer returned to bed, and deemed the drubbing he had received amply compensated by the assurance now obtained of the fidelity of his servant and chastity of his spouse.

The incidents in this novel are amusing enough, but it does not appear that there was any necessity for the lovers to have had recourse to such intricate and perilous expedients. This tale has been copied by Ser Giovanni in the second of the third day of his *Pecorone*, and has given rise to that part of an old English comedy of the 17th century, called the *City Night-cap*, by John Davenport, which relates to Francisco's intrigue with Dorothea, the wife of Ludovico. It is the *Mari cocu, battu, et content*, of Fontaine:—

“Messire Bon eut voulu que le zele  
De son Valet n'eut été jusques là,



Mais le voyant si sage, et si fidele,  
Le bon hommeau des coups se consola."

8. Sismonda, wife of Ariguccio Berlinghieri, a Florentine merchant, fell on a singular stratagem to obtain interviews with her gallant. She procured a string, one end of which she tied to her great toe, while the other went out at the window and reached the street. The lover used to pull the cord as a signal of his approach, and if the lady let it go to him, it was understood that he might come in, as this expressed that her husband was asleep. Ariguccio observing this string, suspected there was some mystery attached to it, and while his wife was asleep, unloosed it from her toe, and fastened it to his own. It was shortly after tugged by the gallant, on which Ariguccio ran to the entrance, and pursued his rival to a considerable distance. The lady, awakening, conjectured what had happened. She accordingly put out the light, went into another apartment, and bribed one of her waiting-maids to take her place, in order to meet the resentment of her husband, who on his return cut off the hair of the substitute, and disfigured her face with blows. He next went to the house of his wife's brothers, informed them of her conduct, and how he had punished her. They accompanied him home, resolved to take a still more complete vengeance on their guilty sister; but on their arrival they found her sitting at work with perfect composure, neatly apparelled, her face unblemished, and her hair properly ordered. As this differed wholly from the account of her husband, they refused to give credit to the other part of their brother-in-law's story, and reviled him bitterly on account of the enormities of which their sister now introduced a plausible detail.

In the 4th novel of this day, we have seen a woman ingeniously justify herself in the sight of her relations, and bring her husband into disgrace; but the incident of the substitution and cutting off the hair, is more ancient than the time of Boccaccio, and seems to have been suggested by the *Fabliau of Les Cheveux coupés* (Le Grand, v. ii. p. 280), where, however, the intrigue is detected in a different manner from the story in the *Decameron*. A gallant comes to his mistress's chamber, and the husband, mistaking him for a robber,

throws him into a tub, and orders his wife to watch till he runs for a light. The wife allows the gallant to escape, and substitutes a calf in his place. At the return of the husband she is turned out of doors. She bribes a servant to lie down by her husband, who, thinking his wife had come back, cuts off her hair; when the husband falls asleep, she resumes her place, and substitutes the calf's skin in room of the hair, by which means she persuades him in the morning that the whole had been a dream. This improbable story is perhaps the immediate original of Boccaccio's, but the incidents may be traced as far back as the tales of Bidpai, the oldest collection in the world. In one part of the fable of the Dervise and Robbers, at least as it appears in the version of Galland, a shoemaker's wife being detected in an intrigue, and tied to a pillar, persuades another woman to take her place. The husband rises during night, and cuts off the nose of the substitute. After this catastrophe the wife instantly resumes her position, and addresses a prayer to God to manifest her innocence, by curing her of the wound. The 40th story of the 2d part of Malespini is a similar tale with that of Bidpai; it also occurs in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, and one or other of these imitations probably suggested the incident in Massinger's *Guardian*, of Severino cutting off Calipso's nose, mistaking her in the dark for his wife *Iolante*.

9. Lidia, wife of Nicostrato, one of the richest inhabitants of Argos, became enamoured of an attendant of her husband, named Pyrrhus. By the intervention of a female confidant, she disclosed to him her passion, and solicited a return. Pyrrhus, suspecting that this message was a stratagem to try his fidelity to his master, demanded, before requiting her affection, that she should kill her husband's favourite hawk, and send him a tuft of his master's beard, as also one of his grinders, in token of her sincerity. All this the lady promised to perform, and added spontaneously, that she would offer her husband in his own presence the most grievous insult he could receive. The two first articles of her engagement she easily fulfilled. She also obtained a tooth, by instructing her husband's pages to turn aside their heads while serving him, and then persuading him



that they did so on account of his bad breath, occasioned by a spoiled tooth, which he readily permitted her to draw. In order to perform the voluntary part of her agreement, she went one day into the garden, accompanied by her husband and Pyrrhus. By her direction the latter climbed a pear-tree, whence, to the great surprise of the former, he exclaimed against the immodesty of his conduct with his wife. The husband ascribes this *deceptio visus* to some magical property in the pear-tree, and, ascending to investigate its nature, he attributes to enchantment the intercourse that takes place between his wife and servant.

All that relates to the pear-tree in this tale corresponds precisely with the 4th lesson in chapter 12th of the collection of oriental stories, known by the name of Bahar-Danush, or Garden of Knowledge.—“The fourth lady having bestowed her attention on the Pilgrim Bramin, despatched him to an orchard, and having gone home, said to her husband, I have heard that in a certain orchard there is a date-tree, the fruit of which is of remarkable fine flavour; but what is yet stranger, whoever ascends it sees many wonderful objects. If, to-day, going to visit this orchard, we gather dates from this tree, and also see its wonders, it will not be unproductive of amusement. In short, she so worked upon her husband with flattering speeches and caresses, that he went to the orchard, and at the instigation of his wife ascended the tree. At this instant she beckoned to the Bramin, who was previously seated expectantly in a corner of the garden. The husband, from the top of the tree beholding what was not fit to be seen, exclaimed in extreme rage, Ah! thou shameless wretch, what abominable action is this? The wife, making not the least answer, the flames of anger seized the mind of the man, and he began to descend from the tree; when the Bramin, with activity and speed, having hurried over the fourth section of the Tirrea Bede, went his way. The husband, when he saw no person near, was astonished, and said to himself, Certainly this vision must have been miraculous. From the hesitation of her husband, the artful wife guessed the cause, and impudently began to abuse him. Then, instantly tying her vest round her waist, she

ascended the tree. When she had reached the topmost branch, she suddenly cried out, O! thou shameless man, what abominable action is this? The husband replied, Woman, be silent; for such is the property of the tree, that whoever ascends it sees man or woman below in such situations. The cunning wife now came down, and said to her husband, what a charming garden and amusing spot is this, where one can gather fruit, and, at the same time, behold the wonders of the world! The husband replied, Destruction seize the wonders which falsely accuse man of wickedness!”—(Scott’s Bahar-Danush, vol. ii.) It is true, that the Bahar-Danush was not written till long after the age of Boccaccio, but the author Inatulla professes to have borrowed it from the traditions of the Bramins, from whom it may have been translated into the languages of Persia or Arabia, and imported from these regions to Europe by some crusader, like other Asiatic romances, which have served as the ground-work of so many of our old stories and poems. Indeed, I have been informed by an eminent oriental scholar, that the above story of the Bahar-Danush exists in a Hindu work, which he believes prior to the age of Boccaccio. That part of the tale in the Decameron, which relates to the stratagem by which the lady obtains a tooth from her husband, seems to have been suggested either by the Conte Devot d’un roi qui voulut faire bruler le fils de son seneschal, or the 68th story of the Cento Novelle Antiche, which is copied from the French tale (see p. 205). The incidents in the novel of Boccaccio concerning the pear-tree form the second story in Fontaine’s La Gageure des trois Commeres. They have also some resemblance to the Merchant’s Tale in Chaucer, and by consequence to Pope’s January and May.

At the conclusion of the seventh day, we are told, that before supper, Dioneo and Fiammetta sung together the story of Palamon and Arcite, which is the subject of Boccaccio’s poem The Theseide, Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale, Fletcher’s drama of the Two Noble Kinsmen, in which he is said to have been assisted by Shakspeare, and the Palemon and Arcite of Dryden. Never has fiction or tradition been embellished by such genius.

DAY VIII. contains stories of tricks or stra-



tagems of men to women, of women to men, or of one man to another.<sup>1</sup>

1. A young man of Milan had placed his affections on a lady, the wife of a rich merchant in that city; on declaring to her his attachment, she promised to comply with his wishes for 200 florins of gold. Shocked at the avarice of his mistress, he borrowed from the husband the sum which he bestowed on the wife. On the departure of the merchant for Genoa, she sent for her lover to bring the money; he arrived, accompanied by a friend, in whose presence he gave her the 200 florins, desiring her to deliver them to her husband when he should come home. He thus obtained the caresses of his venal mistress, and on the husband's return, informed him that having no farther occasion for the sum he had lately borrowed, he had repaid it to his wife. As she had received it in presence of a witness, she was obliged to refund the money she had so shamefully acquired. This is Chaucer's Shipman's Tale, or Story of Dan John: it is Fontaine's *A Femme avare Galant escroc*. The above stratagem is attributed to Captain Philip Stafford, in Johnson's *Lives of Pirates and Highwaymen*. Indeed, that work is full of tricks recorded by Boccaccio, Sabadino, and Sacchetti; which shows that it is a mere invention, unless Johnson's worthies resorted to the Italian novelists for instruction.

2. A priest having fallen in love with the wife of a peasant, goes to the cottage one day in absence of the husband, and obtains whatever he desires from the wife, on depositing his cloak in her hands, as a pledge for payment of a certain sum. The priest afterwards finding that it would be impossible for him to spare the money, but feeling that it was requisite to redeem so essential a part of his dress, sends to his mistress for the loan of her mortar. He returns it with many thanks, at a time he knew her husband would be with her, and desires his messenger to ask for the cloak which had been left as a pledge when the mortar was borrowed. The woman is thus obliged to deliver it up, as she could not assert her right to retain it in presence of her husband.

<sup>1</sup> Di quelle Beppe che tutto il giorno, o donna ad huomo, o huomo a donna, o l' uno huomo a l' altro si fanno.

This tale was probably suggested to the Italian novelist by the first part of the *Fabliau du Prestre et de la Dame*, though the imitation be not nearly so close as in most of the other tales in which Boccaccio has followed the productions of the *Trouveurs*. In the *Fabliau*, a priest, while on an amatory visit to the wife of a burgess, is nearly surprised by the unexpected coming of the husband. His mistress has just time to conceal him in a great basket, which stood in an adjacent apartment; but in the hurry he left his cloak behind him. He had not long remained in the basket before it occurred to him that it might be applied to better purposes than concealment; taking it in his arms, he returned boldly to the room where the burgess was sitting with his wife, and requested, as he had now brought back the basket, of which he had the loan, that the cloak which he left in pawn should be restored to him. (*Fabliaux par Barbazan et Meon*, T. 4. p. 181).

3. The prebendary of Fiesole became enamoured of a widow in his neighbourhood. As he was old, and of disagreeable person, the lady was much distressed by his importunate solicitations. In order to get rid of them, she feigns a readiness to comply with his wishes, and desires him to come to her house on the following evening. The room in which he is received being darkened, she substitutes in her place a waiting-maid of hideous aspect. After he had remained for some time, she sends for his bishop. The whole family then burst into the room with lights, and the priest is at the same moment gratified with a view of his superior, and the mistress for whom he had thus sacrificed his reputation.

This story is taken, with little variation, from the *Fabliau de Pretre et Alison*, of the *Trouveur Guillaume le Normand* (*Le Grand*, 4. p. 297). It is also the 47th of the 2d part of *Bandello*.

7. A man of letters, who had studied at Paris, becomes enamoured, on his return to Florence, of a young widow of that city. She is soon made acquainted with his passion, but resolves, as she had another gallant, to turn it into ridicule. One night when she expected her favoured lover, she sends a waiting-maid to direct the scholar to come that evening to the court behind her house, and wait till he



be admitted. Here he remains for a long while amid the snow, which had fallen the day before, expecting every moment to be invited in, the widow and her lover laughing all the time at his credulity. An excuse is first sent to him, that the lady's brother is arrived at her house, but that he would not stay long. At length, towards morning, he is informed that he may depart, as the brother had remained all night. The scholar goes home almost dead with cold, resolving to be revenged for the trick which he now perceives had been played on him. In the course of a few months the lady is deserted by her lover, and applies to the scholar to recall his affections by magical operations, in which she believes him to be skilful. Pretending to accede to her wishes, the clerk informs her that he will send an image of tin, with which she must bathe herself three times in a river, then ascend naked to the top of some unoccupied building, and remain there till two damsels appear, who will ask what she wishes to have done. Accordingly the lady retires to a farm which she possessed in the country, and having three times immersed herself at midnight in the Arno, she next ascends an uninhabited tower in the vicinity. The scholar, who lay in wait, removes the ladder by which she got up. A long dialogue then follows between them: he reproaches her with the trick she had played him; she begs forgiveness, and entreats to be permitted to descend. This, however, is not granted till the ensuing evening, by which time her skin is all cracked and blistered by the bites of insects and the heat of the sun.

We are informed by some of the commentators on Boccaccio, that the circumstances related in this story happened to the author himself, and that the widow is the same with the one introduced in his *Laberinto d'Amore*. The unusual minuteness with which the tale is related gives some countenance to such an opinion; however this may be, it has evidently suggested the story, in the *Diable Boiteux*, of Patrice, whose mistress, Lusita, makes him remain a whole night in the street before her windows, on the false pretence that her brother, Don Gaspard, is in the house, and that her lover must wait till he depart.

8. Two intimate friends, one called Zeppa,

and the other Spinelloccio, both of whom were married, resided in Sienna. Spinelloccio being frequently in the house of Zeppa, fell in love with the wife of his friend. He carried on an intrigue for some time without being detected, but one day the lady, thinking that her husband was abroad, sent for her gallant, and Zeppa saw him enter his wife's apartment. As soon as Spinelloccio returned home, Zeppa upbraided his spouse with her conduct, but agreed to forgive her, provided she would ask her gallant to the house next day, and afterwards shut him into a chest, on pretence of hearing her husband coming. This being executed, Zeppa enters the room where his friend and rival was confined: he next sends for the wife of Spinelloccio, and having informed her of the conduct of her husband persuades her to a mutual revenge, corresponding to the nature of the offence. Spinelloccio was then drawn from his concealment, "*after which*," says the novelist, "*all parties concerned dined very amicably together, and the same good understanding continued amongst them for the time to come.*"

This story is in the *Seven Wise Masters of Hebers*, but was probably suggested to Boccaccio by the latter part of the *Fabliau Constant du Hamel*, (*Le Grand*, 4. 226). There a priest, a provost, and a forester, attempt to seduce a peasant's wife. The husband has thus a triple vengeance to execute: But in the *Fabliau* this revenge was an ungrateful return to the wife, who had not yielded to the solicitations of her lovers, but had contrived to coop them up successively in a tun which held feathers. This *Fabliau* again probably derived its origin from some oriental tale. In the story of Arouya, in the *Persian Tales*, a lady, solicited by a *cadi*, a doctor, and governor, exposes them to each other.

To Persia the story had probably come from the Bramins, as there is a similar incident in the *Bahar-Danush*, which is founded on their traditions:—"Gohera saw her husband, Houssum, conducted to the Cutwal for examination. She followed, and requested that magistrate to release him; but he refused, unless she would submit to his embraces. She then went to the Cauzi, and requested his interference; but the judge offered her relief only on the same conditions as the Cutwal.



She seemingly consented, and appointed a time for his visit at her lodgings. She then went to the Cutwal, and made also an assignation with that officer. At night the Cauzi comes, bringing with him provisions for a treat, and while feasting is interrupted by a knocking at the door. Fearful of being discovered, he entreats Gohera to conceal him, and she shows him a large jar, into which he creeps, and the lid is fastened upon him. The Cutwal now enters, when, after some time, the door sounds again, and this magistrate is put into a chest, which is locked by Gohera. Next morning she hires porters, and has the grave magistrates carried before the Sultan, who orders them to be severely punished, and Houssum to be released." (Scott's *Bahar-Danush*, vol. iii. Appendix). The story in the *Decameron* is introduced in Fontaine's *le Faiseur d'oreilles et le raccommodeur de Moules*.

10. "It was," says Boccaccio, "and perhaps is still, the custom in all sea-ports, that traders should lodge their merchandise in a public warehouse, and that an account of the nature and value of the goods should be entered in a register. This record being open to all, was of great service to the fair damsels of Palermo, who lay in wait to entrap wealthy strangers." Now, a young Florentine, called Salabaetto, was sent by his masters to Sicily, to dispose of some woollen cloth, valued at 500 florins of gold. This young man soon fell under the observation of a woman, styling herself Signora Jancofiore, who sent a waiting-maid to inform him how deeply she was enamoured of his person,<sup>1</sup> and to request him to meet her at one of the public baths. There, and afterwards at her own house, which is described as elegantly fitted up, she personated a lady of rank and fortune. At length, when she had completely fascinated the Florentine, she entered the room, one night while he was at her house, in a flood of tears, and informed him she had just received letters from a brother, acquainting her, that unless she could transmit him 1000 florins within eight days, he would inevitably lose his head. As

she affirmed that she could not procure the whole within the specified time, the Tuscan agreed to lend her 500 florins, which he had just procured by the sale of the woollen cloth. When she had got possession of this sum, she became more shy of admitting him to her house. After waiting a long while for payment of the money, without receiving it, he saw he had been duped; but as he had no proof of the debt, and was afraid to return to Florence, he sailed for Naples. There his friend Camigiano, treasurer of the Empress of Constantinople, at that time resided. Having acquainted him with the loss sustained, at the suggestion of Camigiano he re-embarked for Palermo with a great number of casks, which, on his arrival, he entered in the warehouse as being filled with oil: he then resumed his acquaintance with his former mistress, and appeared to be satisfied with her apologies. Jancofiore, who understood that the late importation was valued at 2000 florins, and that her lover expected still more precious commodities, thought herself in the way of a richer prize than she had yet obtained, and repaid the 500 florins, that the Florentine might entertain no suspicions of her honesty. Then, on pretence that one of his ships had been taken by corsairs, he procured from her a loan of 1000 florins, on the security of the merchandise which she believed to be in the warehouse, and with this sum he departed to Florence, without the knowledge of his mistress. When she had despaired of his return, she broke open the casks he had left behind, which were now discovered to be filled with salt water, and a little oil on the surface.

The origin of this story may be found in the tales of Petrus Alphonsus. There a certain person lends a sum of money to a treacherous friend, who refuses to repay it. Another person is instructed by the lender to fill some trunks with heavy stones, and offer to deposit this pretended treasure in the hands of the cheat. While the negociation is going on, he who had been defrauded comes to repeat his demand, which the false friend now complies

<sup>1</sup> Plautus, in his *Menechmi*, attributes a similar custom to the courtezans of the Mediterranean islands in his day:—

Morem hunc Meretrices habent;

Ad portum mittunt servulos ancillulas,  
Si qua peregrina navis in portum aderit;  
Rogunt civitatis sit—quid ei nomen siet:  
Post illae extemplo sese adplicent.



with, lest any suspicion should fall on his honesty in presence of the new dupe. This, like most other stories of Alphonsus, was probably borrowed from the east, as a similar one occurs in the Arabian Nights. From Alphonsus the tale passed to the Trouveurs (Le Grand, *Fabliaux*, 3. 282), to the author of the *Gesta Romanorum* (c. 118), and of the *Cento Novelle Antiche*. Boccaccio probably obtained it from the 74th tale of this last work, where the story, as related by Petrus Alphonsus, is given as the third example of those, who, trying to be better, lost the whole. "Qui conta de certi che per cercare del meglio perderono il tutto." The novel of Boccaccio has some resemblance to the under-plot of *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, where Estifania, a courtesan, ensnares Michael Perez by personating a lady of quality, but is herself afterwards cozened with regard to the contents of his caskets.

DAY IX. During this day the narrators are allowed to recount stories on any subject they please,<sup>1</sup> but they seem for the most part to have followed the topics of the preceding one.

1. A widow lady in Pistoia had two lovers, the one called Rinuccio, the other Alexander, of whom neither was acceptable to her. At a time when she was harrassed by their importunities, a person named Scannadio, of reprobate life and hideous aspect, died and was buried. His death suggested to the lady a mode of getting rid of her lovers, by asking them to perform a service which she thought herself certain they would not undertake. She acquainted Alexander, that the body of Scannadio, for a purpose she would afterwards explain, was to be brought to her dwelling by one of her kinsmen, and feeling a horror at such an inmate, she would grant him her love, if, attired in the dead garments of Scannadio, he would occupy his place in the coffin, and allow himself to be conveyed to her house in the place of the deceased. To Rinuccio she sent to request that he would bring the corpse of Scannadio at midnight to her habitation. Both lovers, contrary to expectation, agree to fulfil her desires. During night she watches the event, and soon perceives Rinuccio coming

along bearing Alexander, who was equipped in the shroud of Scannadio. On the approach of some of the watchmen with a light, Rinuccio throws down his burden and runs off, while Alexander returns home in the dead clothes. Next day each demands the love of his mistress, which she refuses, pretending to believe that no attempt had been made to execute her commands.

In an old English ballad a similar expedient is devised by a prioress, to get rid of her three lovers, a knight, a prelate, and a burgher. She promises her affections to the first, if he will lie all night in a chapel as a dead body, and wrapped in a winding-sheet. Next she requires the parson to say mass over the corpse, which she pretends is that of a cousin who had not been properly interred. She then tells the merchant to bring the body to her house, as the deceased owed her money, and must not be buried till his friends discharge the debt; and, in order to terrify the priest, she desires that he should equip himself in disguise of the devil. The lovers all meet in the chapel, where both the knight and priest run off, so that the merchant has no corpse to bring home to his mistress. Hence the allotted service being accomplished by none of them, the lady refuses her love to all three. This tale is entitled the *Pryorys and her Three Wooyrs*, and has been published in *Jamieson's Popular Ballads*, from a MS. in the British Museum, attributed to Lydgate.

2. Is the *Pseautier of Fontaine*.

6. A poor man who kept a small hut in the district of Mugnone, near Florence, for the entertainment of travellers, had a comely daughter, called Niccolosa, of whom a young gentleman of Florence, called Pinuccio, became enamoured. As the lover had reason to believe the affection reciprocal, he set out with Adriano, one of his companions, to whom he imparted the secret. He took his way by the plain of Mugnone, and as he contrived to come to the house of Niccolosa's father late in the evening, he had a pretext for insisting on quarters. Pinuccio and his friend were lodged in one of three beds, which were in the same room: the landlord and his wife lay in the second, and Niccolosa by herself in the remaining one, to which Pinuccio stole when he thought his host and hostess were asleep.

<sup>1</sup> Di quello che piu gli aggrada.



Adriano rising soon after, accidentally removes a cradle which stood at the side of the landlord's bed. The hostess next gets up, but when returning to lie down misses the cradle, and thinking she had nearly gone to bed to her guests, she falls into the very error she wished to avoid; and Adriano, whom she mistakes for her husband, has thus no reason to repent his trouble in accompanying his friend to Mugnone. Pinuccio now intending to return to his own bed, being also misled by the cradle, goes to that of the landlord, to whom, as to his friend, he recounts the manner in which he had passed the night. The enraged father discovers himself by his threats, and the hostess hearing the noise, and still fancying herself with her husband, remarks, that their guests are quarreling. As Adriano thinks proper to reply to this observation, she instantly discovers her mistake, and slips into bed to her daughter. She thence calls to her husband to know what was the matter. On learning the intelligence which he had just received from Pinuccio, she asserts it must be false, as she herself had lain all night with their daughter, and had never closed her eyes. Adriano overhearing this conversation, calls out to Pinuccio, that it is lamentable he cannot get over that habit of walking and speaking in his sleep. To aid the deception, Pinuccio talks for some time in a manner the most incoherent, and then pretends to awake suddenly. The landlord is thus satisfied, and ever remains unconscious of his double disgrace.

This tale has been taken from an old Fabliau of the Trouveur Jean de Boves, entitled *De Gombert et des deux Clercs*. There two clerks go to get their corn grinded. The miller pretends to be from home, and while they are seeking him through the wood, he purloins the corn, but without their suspecting him of the theft. The night scene corresponds with the Decameron, except that the cradle is removed intentionally by one of the clerks, in order to entrap the miller's wife: the catastrophe, however, is different; for the miller, during his quarrel with the other clerk, on account of the information he had unconsciously given, strikes a light, and discovers the circumstances in which his wife is placed. He addresses her in terms the most

energetic. She answers that what she had done was undesigned, which is more than he can say of stealing the corn. The Reeve's Tale in Chaucer seems to be compounded of the Fabliau and the novel of Boccaccio. It bears the nearest resemblance to the former, but in one or two incidents is different from both. A miller deprived two clerks of Cambridge of their corn, by letting their horse loose when they came to have it ground. They find it gone when they return from their search of the animal. Suspecting the thief, they come back one evening with the purpose of being revenged. The cradle is intentionally removed by the one clerk, while the other is with the daughter. During the squabble, the miller's wife mistakes her husband for one of the clerks, and knocks him down. He is then soundly beat by the clerks, who ride off with their corn;—a solution by no means so ingenious as that either of the Fabliau or the tale in the Decameron. The story, as related by Boccaccio, has been imitated in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, and in the *Berceau of Fontaine*.

9. Two young men repair to Jerusalem to consult Solomon. One asks how he may be well liked, the other how he may best manage a froward wife. Solomon advises the first to love others, and the second to repair to the bridge of Oca. From this last counsel neither can extract any meaning, but it is explained on their road home; for when they come to the bridge of that name, they meet a number of caravans and mules, and one of these animals being restive, its master forces it on with a stick. The advice of Solomon being now understood, is followed, and with complete success. From all the Italian novelists we hear of this species of discipline being exercised by husbands, and it is always mentioned with approbation. In many of the Fabliaux, as *De la dame qui fut corrigée* (Le Grand, 3. 204), the cudgel chiefly is employed for procuring domestic felicity. It may perhaps appear singular, that an age of which the characteristic was veneration for the fair sex, should have given commencement to a long series of jests, founded on the principle, that manual discipline is requisite to correct the evil disposition of some wives, and to support the virtue of others. "*La mauvaise femme*



convient il battre, et bonne aussi, a fin qu'elle ne se change," is a maxim inculcated in the romance of Milles et Amys, which was written in the brightest days of chivalry.

10. This story is taken from the Fabliau of the Trouveur Rutebeuf, *De la Demoiselle qui vouloit voler* (Le Grand, vol. iv. p. 316), in which a clerk, while pretending to add wings and feathers to a lady, that she might fly, acts in a similar manner with the priest of Barletta. It is Fontaine's *La Jument du compere Pierre*.

The stories in

DAY X. Are of those who acted with magnificence or generosity in matters of love, or any thing else.<sup>1</sup>

1. A noble Italian, called Ruggieri, entered into the service of Alphonso, King of Spain. He soon perceives that his majesty is extremely liberal to others, but thinking his own merits not sufficiently rewarded, he asks leave to return to his own country. This the king grants, after presenting him with a fine mule for his journey. Alphonso directs one of his attendants to join him on the road, to note if he make any complaint of the treatment he had received, and, if he should, to command his return. The mule having stopped in a river, and refusing to go on, Ruggieri said she was like the person who gave her. Ruggieri being in consequence brought back to the capital, and his words reported to the king, he is introduced into the presence of his majesty, and asked why he had compared him to the mule; "Because," replied Ruggieri, "the mule would not stop where it ought, but stood still when it should have gone on: in like manner you give where it is not suitable, and withhold where you ought to bestow." On hearing this, the king carries him into a hall, and shows him two shut coffers, one filled with earth, another containing the crown and sceptre, with a variety of precious stones. Alphonso desires him to take which he pleases; and Ruggieri having accidentally fixed on the one with earth, the king affirms that it is bad fortune that has all along prevented him from being a partaker of the royal benefits. Then having presented him with

the valuable chest, he allows him to return to Italy.

The rudiments of this story may be traced as far back as the romance of Josaphat and Barlaam. A king commanded four chests to be made, two of which were covered with gold, and secured by golden locks, but were filled with rotten bones of human carcasses. The other two were overlaid with pitch, and bound with rugged cords, but were replenished with precious stones, and ointments of most exquisite odour. Having called his nobles together, the king placed these chests before them, and asked which they deemed most valuable. They pronounced those with the golden coverings to be the most precious, and surveyed the other two with contempt. "I foresaw," said the king, "what would be your determination, for you look with the eyes of sense; but to discern baseness or value, which are hid within, we must look with the eyes of the mind:" he then ordered the golden chests to be opened, which exhaled an intolerable stench, and filled the beholders with horror. The story next appeared in the 109th chapter of the continental *Gesta Romanorum*. There an innkeeper found a chest, which he discovered to be full of money. It was claimed by the owner, and the innkeeper, in order to ascertain if it was the will of Providence he should restore it, ordered three pasties to be made. One he filled with earth, the second with bones of dead men, and the third with the money: he gave his choice of these three to the rightful proprietor, who fixed successively on the two with earth and bones, whence the innkeeper drew an inference in his own favour. This story came to Boccaccio, with the farther modifications it had received in the *Cento Novelle Antiche*. It is related, conformably to the circumstances in the Decameron, both in the *Speculum Historiale*, and in the *Confessio Amantis* of Gower, who cites a *cronikil* as his authority for the tale. Thence it passed into the English *Gesta Romanorum*, where three vessels are exhibited to a lady for her choice, the first of gold, but filled with dead bones; the second of silver, containing earth and worms; and the last of lead, but replenished with precious stones. It was probably from this last work that Shakspeare adopted the story of

<sup>1</sup> Di chi liberalmente, o vero magnificamente alcuna cosa operasse, intorno a fatti d'amore, o d'altra cosa.



the caskets, which forms part of the plot of his Merchant of Venice.

5. Dianora, the wife of a rich man of Udina, in the country of Friuli, in order to get rid of the importunities of her lover Ansaldo, told his emissary that she would requite his affection, if he produced a garden in January, which was then approaching, as fresh and blooming as if it were the month of May. This condition, which the lady conceived impossible to be fulfilled, her lover accomplished by aid of a necromancer. The garden being exhibited to the lady, she went in the utmost distress to her husband, and informed him of the engagement she had come under. As he commanded her at all events to abide by her promise, she waited on Ansaldo, and told him she had come at her husband's desire, to fulfil the agreement. Ansaldo, touched with her affliction and the generosity of her husband, refused this offer; and the necromancer, who happened to be in the house at the time, declined to accept the remuneration which he had stipulated for his services.

Manni observes, that this novel was probably founded on a story current in the age of Boccaccio (and subsequently mentioned by Trithemius), concerning a Jew physician, who, in the year 876, in the middle of winter, caused by enchantment a garden, with trees and flowers in bloom, to appear before a numerous and splendid company. The story, however, of Dianora, as well as the 4th of the present day, had formerly been told by Boccaccio himself, in the 5th book of his *Philocopo*, which is an account of the loves of Flores and Blancafior. There, among other questions, the comparative merit of the husband and lover is discussed at the court of Naples, when the hero of the romance lands in that country. This story of Boccaccio is the origin of the Frankelien's Tale of Chaucer, in which the circumstances are precisely the same as in the *Decameron*, except that the impossible thing required by the lady is, that her lover should remove the rocks from the coast of Britany: a similar tale, however, according to Tyrwhitt, occurs in an old Breton lay, from which he conceives the incidents may have come immediately to the English poet. Boccaccio's novel is unquestionably the origin of a story which occupies the whole of the 12th canto of the

Orlando Innamorato, and is related by a lady to Rinaldo, while he escorts her on a journey Iroldo, a Babylonian knight, had a wife, called Tisbina, who was beloved by a young man of the name of Prasildo. This lady, in order to get rid of her admirer's importunities, offered to requite his affection, provided he should gain admittance to an enchanted garden in a wood, near the confines of Barbary, and bring her a slip of a tree growing there, of which the blossoms were pearls, the fruit emeralds, and the branches gold. The lover sets out on this expedition, and on his way meets an old man, who gives him directions for entering the magic garden with safety, and bestows on him a mirror to drive away the Medusa, by whom it was guarded. By this means Prasildo having accomplished the conditions, returns to Babylon, and the lady is commanded by the husband to fulfil the obligations she had come under. Prasildo, however, declines to take advantage of this compliance, and restores Tisbinia to her lord. But Iroldo, determined not to be outdone in courtesy, insists on resigning his wife to Prasildo, and then leaves Babylon for ever, as he cannot endure to behold even the happiness of which he was himself the author. The tale of Boccaccio is supposed by the editor of Beaumont and Fletcher to be also the origin of the *Triumph of Honour*, the first of their *Four Plays in One*; but it is more probable that these dramatists took their plot from the Frankelien's Tale in Chaucer, as the impossible thing required in the *Triumph of Honour*, by Dorigen from her lover Martius, is that a mass of rocks should be converted into "a champain field."

8. Titus, the son of a Roman patrician, resided during the period of his education at Athens, in the house of Chremes, a friend of his father. A warm and brotherly affection arises betwixt the young Roman and Gisippus, the son of Chremes: They prosecute their studies together, and have no happiness but in each other's society. Gisippus, on the death of his father, being persuaded by his friends to marry, fixes on Sophronia, an Athenian lady of exquisite beauty. Before the day appointed for the celebration of the nuptials, he carries Titus to visit her. The Roman is smitten with an involuntary passion for the



intended bride, and, after a long internal struggle, reluctantly discloses his love to Gisippus. This disinterested friend resigns his pretensions, and on the night of the marriage, Sophronia, without her knowledge, receives Titus instead of Gisippus as her husband. The lady and her family are at first greatly exasperated by the deception, but are afterwards pacified, and Sophronia proceeds with Titus to Rome, whither he was now summoned on account of the death of his father. Some time after this, Gisippus, being reduced to great poverty, repairs to Rome, with the view of receiving succour from his friend; but Titus, not knowing him in the miserable plight in which he appeared, passes him on the street. Gisippus, thinking he had seen and despised him, retires to a solitary part of the city, and next day in despair accuses himself of a murder which he had there seen committed. Titus, who happens to be in court at the time, now recognises his friend, and, in order to save him from punishment, declares that he himself was guilty of the crime. Both, however, are set at liberty, on the confession of the real murderer, who, being present at this singular contest, is touched with pity and remorse. The story coming to the knowledge of Octavius Cæsar, who was then one of the Triumvirs, the delinquent, for the sake of the friends, is pardoned also. Titus bestows his sister in marriage on Gisippus, re-establishes his fortune, and prevails on him to settle in Rome.

This tale is taken from the second story of Petrus Alphonsus; but Boccaccio has made considerable alterations, if we may judge of the original from the form in which it is exhibited by Le Grand (vol. iii. p. 262). There it is not two young men brought up together, who form this romantic attachment, but two mercantile correspondents, the one residing in Syria, and the other in Egypt; and the renunciation of his mistress by the latter takes place soon after his first interview with his partner. The change which has been made in this particular by the Italian novelist, is a manifest improvement. In the next place, in the tale of Alphonsus, it is not thought necessary to deceive the bride after the nuptials, in the manner related in the Decameron; she is transferred, without farther ceremony, as a

piece of property, from one friend to the other, which is a convincing proof of the eastern origin of the tale. Lastly, in Alphonsus, the friend who is reduced in his circumstances does not fancy himself neglected by his former companion; he sees the murder committed before he enters Rome, and avails himself of the incident to get free from a life in which he had no longer any enjoyment.

As thus improved by Boccaccio, the story ranks high among the serious Italian novels. The internal conflict of Titus—the subsequent contest between the friends—the harangue of Titus to the two assembled families, and the beautiful eulogy on friendship, which terminates the tale, form, in the opinion of critics, the most eloquent passages in the Decameron, or perhaps in the Italian language.

The story of Titus and Gisippus was translated into Latin by the novelist Bandello, and into English by Edward Lewicke, 1562, whose version perhaps directed to this tale the notice of Goldsmith, who has inserted it in his miscellanies, though it is there said to be taken from a Byzantine historian, and the friends are called Septimius and Alcander. Boccaccio's story has also evidently suggested the concluding incidents of Greene's *Philomela*, and is the subject of an old French drama, by Hardy, entitled *Gesippe, ou Les Deux Amis*.

10. Gualtier, Marquis of Salluzzo, being solicited by his friends to marry, chooses Griselda, the daughter of a peasant, who was one of his vassals. Wishing to make trial of the temper of his wife, he habitually addresses her, soon after the marriage, in the harshest language. He then successively deprives her of a son and daughter, to whom she had given birth, and persuades her that he had murdered them, because his vassals would not submit to be governed by the descendants of a peasant. Next he produces a fictitious bill of divorce, by virtue of which he sends back his wife to the cottage of her father, and lastly, he recalls her to his palace, on pretence that she may put it in order, and officiate at the celebration of his marriage with a second consort. The lady, whom Griselda at first mistakes for the bride, proves to be her own daughter. Her son is also restored to her, and she is rewarded for her long suffer-



ing, which she had borne with proverbial patience, by the redoubled and no longer disguised affection of her husband.

The original of this celebrated tale was at one time believed to have been an old MS., entitled *Le Parement des Dames*. This was first asserted by Duchat in his notes on Rabelais. It was afterwards mentioned by Le Grand and Manni, and through them by the Abbé de Sade and Galland (*Discours sur quelques anciens poètes*); but Mr Tyrwhitt informs us that Olivier de la Marche, the author of the *Parement des Dames*, was not born for many years after the composition of the *Decameron*, so that some other original must be sought. Noguier, in his *Histoire de Thoulouse*, asserts, that the patient heroine of the tale actually existed in 1103. In the *Annales d'Aquitaine*, she is said to have flourished in 1025. That there was such a person is also positively asserted by Foresti da Bergamo, in his *Chronicle*, though he does not fix the period at which she lived. The probability, therefore, is, that the novel of Boccaccio, as well as the *Parement des Dames*, has been founded on some real or traditional incident; a conjecture which is confirmed by the letter of Petrarch to Boccaccio, written after a perusal of the *Decameron*, in which he says that he had heard the story of Griseldis related many years before.

From whatever source derived, Griselda appears to have been the most popular of all the stories of the *Decameron*. In the 14th century, the prose translations of it in French were very numerous; Le Grand mentions that he had seen upwards of twenty, under the different names, *Miroir des Dames*, *Exemples de bonnes et mauvaises femmes*, &c. Petrarch, who had not seen the *Decameron* till a short time before his death (which shows that Boccaccio was ashamed of the work), read it with much admiration, as appears from his letters, and translated it into Latin in 1373. Chaucer, who borrowed the story from Petrarch, assigns it to the Clerk of Oxenforde, in his *Canterbury Tales*. The clerk declares in his prologue, that he learned it from Petrarch at Padua; and if we may believe Warton, Chaucer, when in Italy, actually heard the story related by Petrarch, who, before translating it into Latin, had got it by heart, in

order to repeat to his friends. The tale became so popular in France, that the comedians of Paris represented, in 1393, a Mystery in French verse, entitled, *Le Mystere de Griseldis*. There is also an English drama, called *Patient Grissel*, entered in Stationers' Hall, 1599. One of Goldoni's plays, in which the tyrannical husband is king of Thessaly, is also formed on the subject of Griseldis. In a novel by Luigi Alamanni, a count of Barcelona subjects his wife to a similar trial of patience with that which Griselda experienced. He proceeds, however, so far as to force her to commit dishonourable actions at his command. The experiment, too is not intended as a test of his wife's obedience, but as a revenge on account of her once having refused him as a husband.

The story of Boccaccio seems hardly deserving of so much popularity and imitation. "An English reader," says Mr Ellis in his notes to Way's *Fabliaux*, "is naturally led to compare it with our national ballad, the *Nut-Brown Maid* (the *Henry and Emma of Prior*), because both compositions were intended to describe a perfect female character, exposed to the severest trials, submitting without a murmur to unmerited cruelty, disarming a tormentor by gentleness and patience; and, finally, recompensed for her virtues by transports rendered more exquisite by her suffering." The author then proceeds to show, that although the intention be the same, the conduct of the ballad is superior to that of the novel. "In the former, the cruel scrutiny of the feelings is suggested by the jealousy of a lover, anxious to explore the whole extent of his empire over the heart of a mistress; his doubts are perhaps natural, and he is only culpable, because he consents to purchase the assurance of his own happiness at the expense of the temporary anguish and apparent degradation of the object of his affections. But she is prepared for the exertion of her firmness by slow degrees; she is strengthened by passion, by the consciousness of the desperate step she had already taken, and by the conviction that every sacrifice was tolerable which insured her claim to the gratitude of her lover, and was paid as the price of his happiness; her trial is short, and her recompense is permanent. For his doubts and jealousy



she perhaps found an excuse in her own heart; and in the moment of her final exultation, and triumph in the consciousness of her own excellence, and the prospect of unclouded security, she might easily forgive her lover for having evinced that the idol of his heart was fully deserving of his adoration. Gautier, on the contrary, is neither blinded by love, nor tormented by jealousy: he merely wishes to gratify a childish curiosity, by discovering how far conjugal obedience can be carried; and the recompence of unexampled patience is a mere permission to wear a cornet without farther molestation. Nor, as in the ballad, is security obtained by a momentary uneasiness, but by long years of suffering. It may be doubted, whether the emotions to which the story of Boccaccio gives rise, are at all different from those which would be excited by an execution on the rack. The merit, too, of resignation, depends much on its motive; and the cause of morality is not greatly promoted by bestowing, on a passive submission to capricious tyranny, the commendation which is only due to an humble acquiescence in the just dispensations of Providence."

The budget of stories being exhausted with the tale of Griselda, the party of pleasure return to Florence and the pestilence.

There are few works which have had an equal influence on literature with the Decameron of Boccaccio. Even in England its

effects were powerful. From it Chaucer adopted the notion of the frame in which he has enclosed his tales, and the general manner of his stories, while in some instances, as we have seen, he has merely versified the novels of the Italian. In 1566, William Paynter printed many of Boccaccio's stories in English, in his work called the Palace of Pleasure. This first translation contained sixty novels, and it was soon followed by another volume, comprehending thirty-four additional tales. These are the pages of which Shakspeare made so much use. From Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, we learn that one of the great amusements of our ancestors was reading Boccaccio aloud, an entertainment of which the effects were speedily visible in the literature of the country. The first English translation, however, of the whole Decameron, did not appear till 1620. In France, Boccaccio found early and illustrious imitators. In his own country he brought his native language to perfection, and gave stability to a mode of composition, which, before his time, had only existed in a rude state in Italy; he collected the current tales of the age, which he decorated with new circumstances, and delivered in a style which has no parallel for elegance, naiveté, and grace. Hence his popularity was unbounded, and his imitators more numerous than those of any author recorded in the annals of literature.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Italian Imitators of Boccaccio—Sacchetti—Ser Giovanni—Massuccio—Sabadino—Giraldi Cinthio—Straparola—Bandello—Malespini, &c.—French Imitators.

OF the Italian imitators of Boccaccio, the earliest was

### FRANCO SACCHETTI,

a Florentine, who was born in 1335, and died about the year 1410. He was a poet in his youth, and travelled to Slavonia and other countries, to attend to some mercantile concerns. As he advanced in years he was raised

to a distinguished rank in the magistracy of Florence; he became *podestà* of Faenza and other places, and at length governor of a Florentine province in the Romagna. Notwithstanding his honours he lived and died poor, but is said to have been a good-humoured facetious man; he left an immense collection of sonnets and canzone, some of which have been lost, and others are still in MS. Of his



tales there were a great variety of MS. copies, which is a proof of the popularity of the author, but all of them had originally been very incomplete, or became so before any one thought of printing the works of this novelist. At length, in 1724, about 250 of the 300 stories, originally written by Sacchetti, were edited by Giovanni Bottari, from two MSS. in the Laurentian library, which were the most ancient, and at the same time the most perfect, at that time extant. This edition was printed at Naples, though with the date of Florence, in two vols. 8vo, and was followed by two impressions, which are *fac similes* of the former, and can hardly be distinguished from it.

Crescimbeni places Sacchetti next to Boccaccio in merit as well as in time. Warton affirms that his tales were composed earlier than the Decameron; but this must be a mistake, as, from the historical incidents mentioned, they could not have been written before 1376. Indeed, the novelist himself, in his proemium, says he was induced to undertake the work from the example of Boccaccio. "Riguardando all' eccellente poeta Giovanni Boccaccio, il quale descrivendo il libro Cento Novelle, &c., Io Franco Sacchetti mi propose di scrivere la presente opera." Were other evidence necessary than the declaration of Sacchetti himself, it is mentioned that he wrote at a much later period than Boccaccio, and in imitation of that author, by many of the Italian commentators, and critics, especially Borghini, in his *Origine di Firenze*,<sup>1</sup> Cinelli in his catalogue of Florentine writers,<sup>2</sup> and the deputies employed for the correction of the Decameron. All these authors also declare, that most of the incidents related by Sacchetti actually occurred. The novelist, in his introduction, informs us that he had made a collection of all ancient and modern tales; to some incidents related by him he had been witness, and a few had happened to himself. The work, he says, was compiled and written for the entertainment of his countrymen, on account of the wretched state of their capital, which was afflicted by the plague, and torn by civil dissensions.

<sup>1</sup> F. Sacchetti scrisse intorno all' anno 1400.

Qual opera scrisse Sacchetti mosso dal esempio del Boccaccio, con stile di lui piu puro e familiare.

At the present day I fear the tales of Sacchetti will hardly amuse, in more favourable circumstances. His work wants that dramatic form, which is a principal charm in the Decameron, and which can alone bestow unity or connexion on this species of composition. The merit of a pure and easy style is indeed allowed him by all the critics of his own country, and his tales are also regarded by the Italian antiquaries, who frequently avail themselves of his works, as most valuable records of some curious historical facts, and of customs that had fallen into disuse; but their intrinsic merit, merely considered as stories, is not great. There are few novels of ingenious gallantry, and none of any length, interest, or pathos, like the *Griselda*, or the *Cymon and Iphigenia* of the Decameron. A great number of them are accounts of foolish tricks performed by Buffalmacco, the painter, and played on Messer Dolcibene, and Alberto da Siena, who seem to have been the butts of that age, as Calandrino was in the time of Boccaccio. But by far the greatest proportion of the work consists of sayings or repartees, which resemble, except in merit, the *Facetiae* of Poggio. Sismondi, in the *Histoire de la Literature du midi de l'Europe*, has pronounced a very accurate judgment on the tales of Sacchetti.—"Au reste, quelque eloge que l'on fasse de la pureté et de l'elegance de son style, Je le trouve plus curieux a consulter sur les moeurs de son temps qu'entraînant par sa gaité lorsque il croit être le plus plaisant. Il rapporte dans ses *Nouvelles* presque toujours des evenemens de son temps et d'autour de lui: ce sont des anecdotes domestiques—de petits accidens de menage, qui, en general, me paroissent tres-peu rejouissans; quelquefois des friponneries qui ne sont guere adroites, des plaisanteries qui ne sont gueres fines; et l'on est souvent tout etonné de voir un plaisant de profession s'avouer vaincu par un mot piquant qui lui a dit un enfant ou un rustre, et qui ne nous cause pas beaucoup d'admiration. Apres avoir lu ces *Nouvelles*, on ne peut s'empêcher de conclure que l'art de la conversation n'avait pas fait dans le quatorzieme siecle des progrès aussi rapides que les autres beaux arts, et que ces grands hommes a qui nous devons tant de chefs d'œuvre n'étaient point si bons a entendre causer que



des gens qui ne les valent pas."—Although this opinion seems on the whole well founded, a few examples may be adduced as specimens of the manner of Sacchetti, in the style of composition which he has chiefly adopted.

One day while a blacksmith was singing, or rather bawling out the verses of Dante, that poet happened to pass at the time, and in a sudden emotion of anger, threw down all the workman's utensils. On the blacksmith complaining of this treatment, Dante replied, "I am only doing to your tools what you do to my verses: I will leave you unmolested, if you cease to spoil my productions." This foolish jest is elsewhere told of Ariosto and other poets.

Some one having come unasked to a feast, and being reproved for his forwardness by the other guests, said it was not his fault that he had not been invited.

A boy of fourteen years of age astonishes a company with the smartness and sagacity of his conversation. One of the number remarks, that the folly of grown-up men is usually in proportion to the sense of their childhood. "You," replies the boy, "must have been a person of extraordinary wisdom in your infancy." This story is the *Puer facete dicax* in Poggio's *Facetiae*, and is there told of a cardinal and a child who delivered a harangue in presence of the pope.

A Florentine buffon, seeing a senator and a person of villainous appearance quarrelling at a gaming-house, and the spectators looking quietly on without interfering, offered himself as umpire. This being accepted, he decided for the rascal, without hearing the state of the game, on the ground that where two persons of an exterior so dissimilar dispute, the lookers-on take the part of the man of respectable appearance, if he has the least shadow of right. There is a similar story recorded of a decision given by the Chevalier de Grammont against Louis XIV.

Philip of Valois lost a favourite hawk, for which he offered a reward of two hundred francs. This falcon was some time after found by a peasant, who, recognising the royal bird by the *fleurs de lis* engraved on the bells, carried it to the palace, and was admitted to present it to his majesty by the usher of the chamber, on condition that he should give

him half of whatever recompense was bestowed. The peasant informed the king of this agreement, and solicited as his reward fifty strokes of the baton. He accordingly receives twenty-five blows, and the usher has the remainder of the gratification; but the clown afterwards privately obtains a pecuniary remuneration from the monarch. This story coincides with an English ballad of the end of the 14th century, published in Weber's *Metrical Romances*, entitled *Sir Cleges*, where the knight of that name, who wishes to present an offering to King Uter, is admitted into the palace by the porter, and introduced to the royal presence by the steward, on condition that each should receive a third of the recompense bestowed on him by the monarch. The knight being requested by the king to fix his reward, chooses twelve bastinados, eight of which he enjoys the satisfaction of distributing with his own hand between the steward and the porter.

These are a few of the tales of Sacchetti, which are said to have had some foundation in fact. There are also a good many stories derived from the east, through the medium of the *Gesta Romanorum* and the *Fabliaux*.

138. The master of a family, resolving to rule his house without dispute, places a pair of breeches in the hall, and calls on his wife to come and fight for them, if she wishes any longer to contest the superiority. This novel of Sacchetti is incomplete, and there is no account of the issue of the combat, but it is evidently taken from a *fabliau*, entitled *De Sire Hain et de dame Anieuse* (*Le Grand*, 3. 190), where the combat ends in favour of the husband. This contest has probably given rise to the French phrase, *Elle porte les culottes*, which has become proverbial, I believe, in every European nation where the pre-eminence is disputed.

140. From the story in the *Fabliaux* concerning three Blind Beggars of Compiègne (see p. 200, &c.). In the original, however, they get no money, but in Sacchetti one of their number receives a small coin, and is told it is one more valuable,—an alteration which is certainly no improvement. The tale, as related by Sacchetti, is the second novel of Sozzini.

152. Story of a man who gives a present of



an ass, that had been taught some curious tricks, to a great lord, and receives in return a horse finely caparisoned. Another person hearing of this sends two asses, but is disappointed of his requital. This story was originally in the *Fabliaux*, and has been imitated in various forms in almost every language.

166. Is the first of a series of tales concerning cures performed in an extraordinary or comical manner. It is also from one of the *Fabliaux*, entitled *L' Arracheur de Dents* (Le Grand, 2. 293), where a tooth-drawer fastens one end of an iron wire to the tusk that is to be pulled out, and the other to an anvil; he then passes a red-hot iron before the nose of his patient, who, from the surprise, throws himself suddenly back, and by this jerk the tooth is extracted.

198. A blind beggar hides 100 florins under a stone in a chapel, but, being observed by some one, his money is stolen. Having discovered his loss, he desires his son to place him next morning at the entrance of the church, and observe if any one going in should eye him in a peculiar manner. He is in consequence informed that a certain person, who was in fact the thief, had been very particular in his regards. To him the beggar straightway repairs, and tells him that he has 100 florins concealed in the church, and 100 more lent out, which are to be restored in eight days, and concludes with requesting, that he would lay out the whole for him to the best advantage. The thief, in hopes of being enabled to purloin all, replaces what he had stolen. There is a similar story in the *Arabian Nights*—14th Tale of Alphonse—Le Grand, 3. 282.—*Gesta Romanorum*, c. 118.—*Cento Novelle Antiche*, N. 74.

206. A miller's wife substitutes herself for a woman with whom she discovered her husband had an assignation, and her spouse had previously agreed to share with a friend the favours he was to receive. This tale is taken, with little variation, from *Le Meunier d' Aleus* (Le Grand, 3. 292). The leading circumstances, however, have been told oftener than once in the *Fabliaux*, and have escaped the notice of few of the French or Italian novelists. They form the *Quinque ova* in the *Facetiae* of Poggio; the 9th of the *Cent Nou-*

*velles Nouvelles*; the 8th of the *Queen of Navarre*, and the *Quiproquo* of Fontaine.

207. This story is from a *fabliau*, entitled *La Culotte des Cordeliers* (Le Grand, 1. 299). It is there told, that a merchant's wife in Orleans had a clerk for a gallant. The husband came home one night unexpectedly. The clerk had time to escape, but left an essential article of dress behind him, which on the following morning the husband put on by mistake. Before evening he remarked the change in his clothes, and on his return home reproached his wife with her infidelity. Aware, however, of her perilous situation, she had applied, during her husband's absence, for a similar article of dress, at the monastery of St Francis. She persuaded her spouse that she had procured what he then wore, for the purpose of transmitting his name to posterity; and, on inquiry, the husband of course found her declaration confirmed by the monks of St Francis. In *Sacchetti* the lover is a friar, and at his request a monk goes to demand what the friar had left from the husband, as relics of St Francis, which his wife had procured from the monastery. The story is in *Sabadino* (p. 38), the *Facetiae* of Poggio, where it is the *Braccae Divi Francisci*, and the *Novellino* of Massuccio (3d of 1st part); but in the last work the monks come to take back what they had lent, in solemn procession: Massuccio's tale has been versified in the *Nouvelle Galanti* of Casti, under title of *Brache di San Griffone*. Similar incidents are related in the *Apology for Herodotus*, by Henry Stephens, and in the *Jewish Spy*, where we are informed by the author in a note, that this adventure actually happened to a Jesuit in France. Of all these tales the origin may, perhaps, be a story in *Apuleius*, where a gallant is detected by the husband from having left his sandals. The lover afterwards accounts for their having been found in the house, by accusing the husband's slave (with whom he was in collusion), in presence of his master, of having stolen them from him at the public bath. The story of *Apuleius* is versified in the *Orlando Innamorato* (C. 55), but there a mantle is left by the gallant instead of sandals.

In chronological order, the novelist who comes next to *Sacchetti*, is



SER GIOVANNI,<sup>1</sup>

a Florentine notary. His tales, as he mentions in a sonnet prefixed, were begun in 1378, and they were written at a village in the neighbourhood of Forli. They were not published, however, till 1558, at Milan. Those copies which bear the date of 1554, are in fact a subsequent edition with a false date, and no other impression, which was genuine and perfect, appeared till 1757. This work is entitled *Il Pecorone* (the Dunces), a title which the author assumed, as some Italian academicians styled themselves, *Insensati*, *Stolidi*, &c., appellations in which there was not always so much irony as they imagined.

In point of purity and elegance of style, Ser Giovanni is reckoned inferior only to Boccaccio; a number of his tales are also curious in a historical point of view, and correspond precisely with facts related by Giovanni Villani. Indeed, some have erroneously believed that this historian was the Giovanni who wrote the *Pecorone*.

Near the commencement of the work the novelist feigns that a young man of Florence, named Aurette, fell in love by report with a nun of a convent at Forli. With the design of having frequent opportunities of seeing her, Aurette repaired to Forli, and became a monk of the same order. He was soon appointed chaplain of the convent, and in that capacity had liberty of paying daily visits to his mistress. At length it is agreed, that at these interviews each should relate a tale. The work is accordingly divided into days, the number of which is twenty-five; each day contains two stories, and generally concludes with songs or amorous verses.

The first story of Ser Giovanni is one of the most beautiful triumphs of honour which has ever been recorded. Galgano, a young gentleman of Siena, becomes deeply enamoured of a lady named Donna Minoccia. After paying court to her a considerable time in vain, the lady is induced, by the wonderful eulogies accidentally given of him by Messer Stricca, her husband, to invite him to an interview

during a journey of the latter to Perugia.—“Così sentendo Galgano che Messer Stricca era ito a Perugia, si mosse la sera a ora competente, e andò a casa colei ch'egli amava assai più che gli occhi suoi. E giunto nel cospetto della donna, con molta riverenza la salutò, dove la donna con molta feste lo prese per mano, e poi l'abbraccio, dicendo: ben venga il mio Galgano per cento volte; e senza più dire si donarono a pace più e più volte. E poi la donna fe venire confetti e vini, e bevuto e confettato ch'ebbero insieme, la donna lo prese per mano e disse: Galgano mio, egli è tempo d'andare a dormire, e però audianci a letto. Rispose Galgano e disse: Madonna, a ogni piacer vostro. Entrati che furono a camera, dopo molti belli e piacevoli ragionamenti, la donna si spogliò et entrò nel letto, e poi disse a Galgano: E mi pare che tu sia sì vòrgognoso e sì temente; che hai tu? non ti piaccio io? no sei tu contento? non hai tu ciò che tu vuoi? Rispose Galgano: Madonna sì, e non mi potrebbe Iddio aver fatto maggior grazia, che ritrovarmi nelle braccia vostre: E così ragionando sopra questa materia, si spogliò, e entrò nell letto allato a colei, cui egli aveva tanto tempo desiderata. E poi che fu entrato le disse: Madonna, io voglio una grazia da voi, se vi piace. Disse la donna, Galgano mio, domanda; ma prima voglio che tu m'abbracci, e così fe. Disse Galgano, Madonna, io mi maraviglio forte, come voi avete stasera mandato per me più che altre volte, avendovi io tanto tempo desiderata e seguita, e voi mai non voleste me vedere nè udire. Che v'ha mosso hora? Rispose la Donna: Io te lo diro. Egli è vero che pochi giorni sono, che tu passasti con un tuo sparviere quinci oltre; di che il mio marito mostro che ti vedesse e che t'invitasse a cena, e tu nonolesti venire. All ora il tuo sparviere volò dietro a una Gazza; e io veggendolo così bene schermire con lei, domandai il mio marito, di cui egli era; onde egli mi rispose ch'egli era del più virtuoso giovane di Siena e ch'egli aveva bene a cui somigliare; però ch'è non vide mai nessuno compiuto quanto eri tu in ogni cosa. E sopra questo mi ti lodò molto, onde io udendoti lodare a quel modo, e sapiendo il bene che tu mi avevi voluto, posemi in cuore di mandare per te, e di non t'esser più cruda; e questa è la cagione. Ris-

<sup>1</sup> IL PECORONE di Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, nel quale si contengono cinquanta Novelle Antiche, belle d'invenzione e di stile.



pose Galgano : è questo vero ? Disse la donna : certo sì. Hacci nessuna altra cagione ? Rispose la Donna—No. Veramente, disse Galgano, non piaccia a Dio, nè voglia, poi che 'l vostro marito m' ha fatto e detto di me tanta cortesia, ch' io usi a lui villania. E subito si gittò fuori del letto, e rivestissi e prese commiato dalla donna, e andossi con Dio ; ne mai più guardò quella donna per quello affare, e a messer Stricca portò sempre singolarissimo amore e riverenza."

1. 2. A student of Bologna requests his master to instruct him in the science of love. The learned doctor directs him to repair to the church of the Frati Minori, to observe the ladies who assembled there, and report to him by whose beauty he is chiefly captivated. It happens that the scholar is smitten with the charms of his master's wife, of whose attractions he gives him a rapturous description ; but neither the teacher nor pupil are aware of the person on whom the doctor's lessons are practised. The student from time to time reports to his preceptor the successful progress of his suit, which he carries on entirely according to his instructions. At length, however, the doctor's suspicions being awakened, he enters his own house at the time his pupil had mentioned as the hour of rendezvous with his mistress. When the lady heard him at the door she concealed her lover under a heap of half-dried linen. The husband having made search through the house, believes at length that his suspicions were groundless. Next day, however, the young man, who was still unconscious of the strong interest which his master took in the occurrence, related to him the alarm he had received from the husband of his mistress, and the whole story of his concealment.

This tale, which also occurs in the *Nights of Straparola* (4. of the 4), is probably of eastern origin, as it resembles the story of the *Second Traveller* in the *Bahar-Danush*, a work compiled from the most ancient Brahmin traditions. But whatever may be its origin, the story of *Ser Giovanni* is curious, as being the foundation of those scenes of Shakspeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* where Falstaff reports to Mr Ford, under the name of Brooke, the progress of his suit with Mrs Ford, and the various contrivances by which he escaped

from the search of the jealous husband, one of which was being carried out of the house concealed in a heap of foul linen. Shakspeare derived these incidents through the medium of the collection entitled *The Fortunate, Deceived, and Unfortunate Lovers*, of which the first tale is a translation of *Ser Giovanni* ; he may also have looked at the story of the *Two Lovers of Pisa*, related in *Tarleton's Newes out of Purgatorie*, where the incidents are related according to Straparola's version of the story. Our great dramatist, however, has given a different turn to the incidents, by the ludicrous character of Falstaff, and by the assignations of the lady being merely devices to expose him to ridicule. Moliere, too, has formed on this tale his comedy *L'Ecole des Femmes*, where the principal amusement arises from a gallant confiding the progress of his intrigue with a young lady to her guardian, who is on the eve of espousing his ward. It has also furnished the subject of another French play, called *Le Maître en Droit*, and has been imitated by Fontaine under the same title. Finally, it has suggested that part of *Gil Blas* where Don Raphael confides to Balthazar the progress of an amour with his wife, and particularly details the interruptions he met with from the unexpected arrival of the husband.

2. 1. A son, while on death-bed, writes to his mother to send him a shirt made by the most happy woman in the city where she resided. The mother finds that the person whom she selects is utterly wretched, and is thus consoled for her own loss, as her son intended. This tale has given rise to the *Fruitless Enquiry, or Search after Happiness*, of Mrs Heywood, one of the earliest of our English novelists. There a young man having disappeared, his mother in despair consulted a fortune-teller, who said that to procure his return she must get a shirt made for him by a woman completely contented. The consequent search introduces the relation of a number of stories, tending to show that no one is perfectly happy. These moral fictions are probably of eastern origin. Abulfaragius, the great Arabic historian, who lived in the 13th century, informs us that Iskender while dying, in order to console his mother, desired her to prepare a banquet for all those who



till that moment had passed through life without experiencing affliction.

2. 2. Relates a revenge taken by a cavalier, in return for an alarm which his mistress had given him during an assignation. It is derived from the French Fabliau *Les Deux Changeurs* (Barbazan, vol. iii. p. 254), and has been imitated in *Bandello Straparola*, and the 1st tale of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, entitled *La Medaille au Revers*.

3. 1. Describes manners which to us appear very singular and scandalous, but do not seem to have been considered in that light in the 14th century. The freedom with which Boccaccio has treated the church of Rome has excited much astonishment; but his tales are not more severe on the clergy than this and another story of *Ser Giovanni*, who seems in his religious politics to have been inimical to the establishment of the church at Avignon.

3. 2. Is the 7th of the 7th of the *Decameron*.

4. 1. Is a very singular but well-known story. A young man, named *Giannotto*, is adopted by *Ansaldo*, a rich Venetian merchant. He obtains permission to go to *Alexandria*, and sets sail in a ship richly laden. On his voyage he enters the port of *Belmont*, where a lady of great wealth resided, and who announced herself as the prize of any person who could enjoy her. *Giannotto* is entertained in her palace, and, having partaken of wine purposely mixed with soporific ingredients, he falls asleep on going to bed, and his vessel is confiscated next morning, according to the stipulated conditions. He returns to *Venice*, fits out another vessel for *Belmont*, and acts in a similar manner. The third time *Ansaldo* is forced to borrow ten thousand ducats from a Jew, on condition of his creditor being allowed to take a pound of flesh from his body if he does not pay by a certain time. *Giannotto's* expedition is now more fortunate, and he obtains the lady in marriage by refraining from the wine, according to a hint he received from a waiting-maid. Occupied with his bride, he forgets the bond of *Ansaldo* till the day it is due; he then hastens to *Venice*, but as the period had elapsed, the Jew refuses to accept ten times the money. At this crisis the new-married lady arrives, disguised as a lawyer, and announces, as was

the custom in Italy, that she had come to decide difficult cases; for in that age delicate points were not determined by the ordinary judges of the provinces, but by doctors of law, who were called from *Bologna*, and other places at a distance. The pretended lawyer being consulted on the claim of the Jew, decides that he is entitled to insist on the pound of flesh, but that he should be beheaded if he draw one drop of blood from his debtor. The judge then takes from *Giannotto* his marriage ring as a fee, and afterwards banters him in her own character for having parted with it.

This story of the bond is of eastern origin; it occurs in the *Persian Monshee*, and innumerable works which were written about the time of the *Pecorone*. The principal situation has been spun out in the adventures of *Almoradin*, related in the French story of *Abdallah*, the son of *Hanif*, and every one will recognize in this tale a part of the plot of *Shakspeare's Merchant of Venice*. It was transferred, however, into many publications intermediate between the *Pecorone* and the *Merchant of Venice*, by which it may have been suggested to the English dramatist. There was, in the first place, an old English play on this subject, entitled the *Jew*. It was also related in the *English Gesta Romanorum*, and the ballad of *Gernutus*, or the *Jew of Venice*. The incidents, however, in *Shakspeare* bear a much closer resemblance to the tale of *Ser Giovanni*, than either to the ballad or to the *Gesta Romanorum*. In the ballad there is nothing said of the residence at *Belmont*, nor the incident of the ring, as it is a judge, and not the lady, who gives the decision. In the *Gesta* the lady is daughter of the emperor of *Rome*, and the pound of flesh is demanded from the borrower, without the introduction of a person bound for the principal debtor. There are some phrases, however, in the *Gesta*, which would lead us to think that *Shakspeare* had at least consulted that work. "*Conventionem meam*," says the Jew, "*volo habere*." The probability is, that he compiled from some lost translation of the tale in the *Pecorone*, the *Gesta Romanorum* and the ballad of *Gernutus*, and interwove all with the story of the caskets, in such a manner, as to render his plot more absurd than the incidents of any



one of his originals. A story somewhat similar is told by Gregorio Leti, in his *Life of Sixtus V.*; but there a Jew offers a pound of his flesh as security to a merchant, whose property in Hispaniola he had insured. It also occurs in a work of the Spanish jesuit, Gracian.

4. 2. Story of an old French count, who obtains a young bride by employing one of the king's squires, who overthrows all the count's rivals in a tournament, and afterwards allows himself to be vanquished by the infirm and aged suitor. After the death of the old count the young squire obtains the widow, who is represented as holding a very curious conversation with her father, copied from the 15th tale of Sacchetti. See also the *Excusatio Sterilitatis* in Poggio's *Facetiae*.

5. 2. Is from the 9th of the 9th day of the Decameron.

6. 1. In the 13th century there were two celebrated theologians in the university of Paris, who had frequent disputations. The one was called Messer Alano, and the other Pierre: the former was a zealous catholic, but the latter was suspected of heretical opinions. Alano having made a journey to Rome, and being shocked with the wickedness that there prevailed, offered himself as a servant to a rigid order of monks on the Apennine mountains. Here he remained a considerable time, employed in menial offices, and regarded as almost an idiot by the brethren. Meanwhile, through his absence, the tenets of Peter gained ground in the university of Paris, and at length this heretic proceeded to Rome, to maintain heterodox propositions in the consistory. A council was convoked, which all the bishops and abbots in Italy were invited to attend. At his earnest request, Alano was carried to Rome to see the pope, by the abbot of the monastery to which he had retired, and being a man of diminutive stature, was brought into the council concealed under the robes of his superior. Peter, by his imposing appearance and thundering eloquence, daunted his opponents, and deterred them from reply; but after a pause, Alano started out between the legs of the abbot, and confuted, in an elegant Latin oration, the heretical doctrines of his former adversary. This Messer Alano, I suppose, was Alain de L'Isle, a celebrated

theologian of the university of Paris, who lived in the 13th century, and was distinguished by the appellation of Doctor Universalis. Among his works, a catalogue of which is given by Fabricius, there exists—*Commentaria sive septem libri explanationum in Divinationes Propheticas Merlini Caledonii, a Galfredo Monemutensi Latino carmine redditae Britannico: Francfurti, 1608, 8vo.*

1. & 2. of 7. Contain the blackest and most dreadful examples of Italian jealousy. In the first a husband invites the relations of his wife and of his wife's lover to an entertainment, and has them all beaten to death by his domestics. The lady is afterwards tied to the dead body of her lover, and is thus left by her husband till she expires. "Fu questa crudelta," says the author, "da certi lodata, e da certi biasimata; ma nessuno ardiva aprir la bocca, considerato ch'era grand'uomo in Roma."

8. 1. Origin of the factions of Guelphs and Ghibellines: two German lords of the name of Guelfe and Gibelin, having quarrelled about a hound in the 13th century, commenced a bloody war. Each was joined by his adherents: the former obtained the protection of the pope, the latter that of the emperor. Their quarrel passed into Italy from one of the Guelph faction having broken a promise of marriage to a lady, whose family in consequence leagued itself with the Ghibellines; the dissension thence spread all over Italy. The Guelphs ruled some time in Florence, but were expelled from it by their foes in 1260.

8. 2. A deceit practised on the public of Florence by the Ghibellines, during their banishment, which leads to their return, and the expulsion of the Guelphs.

9. 1. The doge of Venice employed an architect, called Bindo, to erect a building which should contain all the treasure of the republic, and should be inaccessible to depredators. This ingenious artist reserved a moveable stone in a part of the wall, in order that he might himself enter when he found convenient. He and his son having soon after fallen into great poverty, they one night obtained access by this secret opening, and abstracted a golden vase. The loss was some time after remarked by the doge, while exhi-



biting the treasury to a stranger. In order to discover the fraud, he closed the doors, ordered some straw to be burned in the interior of the building, and found out the concealed entrance by the egress of the smoke. Conjecturing that the robber must pass this way, and that he would probably return, he placed at the bottom of this part of the wall a cauldron filled with pitch, which was constantly kept boiling. Bindo and his son were soon forced by poverty to have recourse to their former means of supply. The father fell up to the neck in the cauldron, and, finding that death was inevitable, he called to his son to cut off his head, and throw it where it could not be found, in order to prevent farther discovery. Having executed this command, the young man returned home, and informed his neighbours that his father had gone on a long journey, but he was obliged to communicate the truth to his mother, whose affliction now became the chief cause of embarrassment: For the doge perceiving that the robber must have had associates, ordered the skeleton to be hung upon a gibbet, in the expectation that it would be claimed. This spectacle being observed from her house, by his widow, her cries brought up the guard, and her son was obliged, on hearing them approach, to wound himself on the hand, to afford a reasonable pretext for her exclamations. She next insisted that her son should carry off the skeleton from the gibbet. He accordingly purchased twelve habits of black monks, in which he equipped twelve porters whom he had hired for the purpose. Having then disguised himself with a vizard, and mounted a horse covered with black cloth, he bore off the body spite of the guards and spies by whom it was surrounded, and who reported to the doge that it had been conveyed away by demons. The story then relates other means to which the doge resorted, all of which are defeated by the ingenuity of the robber. At length the curiosity of the doge is so much excited, that he offers the hand of his daughter to any one who will discover the transaction. On this the young man reveals the whole, and receives the promised bride in return.

This story is as old as Herodotus, who tells it of a king of Egypt and his architect. There is some slight variation in the incidents of the

Pecorone; but Bandello (Par. 1. N. 25) has adhered closely to the Greek original. In both, an architect employed by a king of Egypt leaves a stone in the walls of the treasury, which can be removed at pleasure. At his death he bequeathes the knowledge of this secret as a legacy to his two sons; after this the stories correspond with the Pecorone, except that one of the brothers is caught in a net, in place of falling into a cauldron, and the body when hung up is removed by the surviving brother intoxicating the guards. What is related by other Greek writers concerning the brothers Agamedes and Trophonius, who were architects employed by Grecian kings to build palaces, corresponds with the story of Herodotus. The father murdered by his son in the Seven Wise Masters is a similar story, as also that of Berinus, in a very old French romance, entitled *L'Histoire du Chevalier Berinus*. In this last work it is the treasury of Philip, a Roman emperor, that is broken into. In order to discover the robber, that monarch exposes his daughter to public prostitution, in expectation that she may extract the secret in the hour of dalliance. Berinus reveals the theft, and the lady, that she may distinguish him in the morning, makes an indellible black mark on his face. Berinus does the same to the other knights, but his mark alone is found to be the size of the princess's thumb. This romance, of which the MS. is extremely old, is the original of the Merchant's Second Tale, or Story of Beryn, sometimes published with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The first half of the story, however, concerning the treasury, has not been adopted by the English poet, or, at least, is not in that part of his tale which is preserved.

9. 2. The son of the Emperor of Germany runs off with the daughter of the King of Arragon, which occasions a long war between these two powers.

10. 1. Story of the Princess Denise of France, who, to avoid a disagreeable marriage with an old German prince, escapes in disguise to England, and is there received in a convent. The king passing that way, falls in love with and espouses her. Afterwards, while he was engaged in a war in Scotland, his wife brings forth twins; but the queen-



mother sends to acquaint her son that his spouse had given birth to two monsters. In place of his majesty's answer, ordering them to be nevertheless brought up with the utmost care, she substitutes a mandate for their destruction, and also for that of the queen. The person to whom the execution of this command is entrusted, allows the queen to depart with her twins to Genoa. At the end of some years she discovers her husband at Rome, on his way to a crusade; she there presents him with his children, and is brought back with them in triumph to England.

The principal part of Chaucer's *Man of Lawes Tale* is taken from this story. There Custance, the daughter of the Emperor of Rome, is married to an eastern soldan. After the death of this monarch, Custance flies to England, where she is received into the house of a constable of Northumberland. She is accused by a rejected lover of the murder of the constable's wife, but is saved by a miraculous interposition of Providence, and married to the King of England. After this the stories correspond precisely. Tyrwhitt, who does not seem to have been aware of the existence of the novel in the *Pecorone*, says, "that Chaucer had his *Man of Lawes Tale* from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*." To Gower he thinks it came from an old English rhyme, entitled *Emaré*, which professes to be taken from a Breton lay. But Mr Ritson, by whom *Emaré* has been published, thinks that its primary source is the legendary life of Offa, King of the West Angles, attributed to Matthew Paris. In *Emaré*, the heroine who bears that name is exposed on the sea in a boat, on account of her refusing to comply with the incestuous proposals of her father. She is driven on the coast of Wales, and married to the king of that country. The story then corresponds with the *Pecorone*, except that, in the conclusion, the son of *Emaré* serves the king as a cupbearer. While acting in this capacity, the monarch discovers him to be his child, and in consequence finds out his queen whom he had lost. This is also the story of the knight's plot in the *English Gesta Romanorum*. It is the subject, too, of a very old French romance, published in 4to, without date, entitled *Le Roman de la Belle He-*

lene de Constantinople. There, as in *Emaré*, the heroine escapes to England to avoid a marriage with her father the King of Constantinople. The story then proceeds as in the other versions. At length she is ordered to be burnt, but is saved by the Duke of Gloucester's niece kindly offering to personate her on that occasion. The romance is spun out by long details of the exploits of her husband against the Saracens, and she is finally discovered by him in France, on his way to the Holy Land. In these fictions the incidents are not very probable; but stories of wonderful adventure, miraculous interpositions, and discoveries, were less disgusting in old times than they have now become, not only because they were more likely to happen, but because the bounds of probability were then less known and ascertained.

The greater part of the remaining tales of the *Pecorone* are historical, and were furnished to the novelist, as he himself informs us, by his friends and contemporaries Giovanni and Matteo Villani, who have transmitted the most authentic chronicles of these early ages. Those stories that recount the dissensions of Florence are strikingly illustrative of its situation, of the character of its principal inhabitants, and of the factions by which it was distracted. But the Italian chroniclers, though well acquainted with the transactions of their native cities and provinces, in their own times, possessed but inaccurate information concerning foreign countries. Accordingly, those tales which relate to the affairs of other nations, are merely curious, as exhibiting in some degree the nature of the historical opinions, propagated and believed in the 14th century.

Thus, in the second of the 19th day, it is related that William of Normandy got possession of the throne of England, having vanquished Taul, the king of the island, in a great battle. After him reigned his son William, and his second son Henry, who slew the blessed Thomas of Canterbury, because he reproved him for his vices, and retaining the tythes of the church; on account of which murder God wrought a great judgment on him, for as he was riding in Paris with King Lewis, a sow ran in between the feet of his horse, so that he was tumbled down, and the



king died in consequence of the fall.<sup>1</sup> Henry left his crown to his son Stephen. That monarch bequeathed it to a second Henry, who was followed by his son John. This prince was distinguished for his courtesy (*questo re Giovanni fu il piu cortese signor del Mondo*), but dying without children, was succeeded by his brother Richard, &c. &c. I do not know how King John (unless it was by his dastardly submission to the pope), obtained such high reputation in Italy: but the novels of that country, particularly the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, are full of instances of his generosity and courtesy.

The last tale contains the history of Charles, Count of Anjou, brother of St Louis. This story occupies a fifth part of the whole work, and is by much too long to have been related at a stolen interview between a nun and an enamoured chaplain. In some of the MS. copies of the *Pecorone*, there is substituted for this historical novel an account of an intrigue carried on by a young man with a nun, and of the extraordinary punishment that remained to him after his death.

In no species of composition is the stagnation or degeneracy of national literature, which took place in Italy from the end of the 14th to the conclusion of the 15th century, more remarkable than in that with which we are now engaged. I know of no imitator of Boccaccio worthy to be mentioned in the course of that period: the twelve novels of Gentile Sermini of Sienna, and those of Fortini, both of whom lived during this interval, are totally uninteresting; yet in them we may trace the origin of our most ordinary jests, or, at least, a coincidence with them; thus, the 10th of Sermini is the story of one stammerer meeting another, and each supposing that his neighbour intends to ridicule him. In the 8th novel of Fortini, a countryman is persuaded at market, by the repeated assertions of the by-standers, that the kids he had for sale were capons, and he disposes of them as such.

Subsequent to Ser Giovanni, the first novelist deserving of notice is

<sup>1</sup> The Roman Catholics of the 14th century seem to have held this sow in the same respect that the Jacobites did the *little gentleman in the velvet coat*, who

### MASSUCCIO DI SALERNO,<sup>2</sup>

who flourished about 1470. The date of the composition of his tales, at least, cannot be placed earlier, as he mentions in one of his stories the capture of Arzilla, which happened in that year. Of the circumstances of the life of this novelist, the little that may be known can only be gathered from his writings. He was a Neapolitan by birth, and a man of some rank and family: he seldom resided, however, in his own country, the greater part of his life having been spent in the service of the dukes of Milan. In his *Proœmium* he asserts the truth of his stories more vehemently than usual. "Invoco," says the author, "l'altissimo Dio per testimonio che tutte son verisimile historie; e le piu negli nostri moderni tempi avvenute." It is pretended, in the same part of his work, that he had tried to imitate the language and idiom of Boccaccio; an attempt, however laudable, in which he has been extremely unsuccessful, as his style is corrupted by the frequent use of the Neapolitan dialect, and his sentences are often strangely inverted. The tales of Massuccio, however, are more original than those of most Italian novelists, few being borrowed from Boccaccio, or even from the *Fabliaux*. Whatever may be the merit of Massuccio, if we may judge from the number of editions, he has been, next to the father of Tuscan prose, the most popular of all the authors of this class. His novels were first published at Naples, folio, 1476; afterwards at Venice, 1484; again in 1492, without date of place; there was a 4to edition in 1522, and three in 8vo, 1525, 1531, 1535, all at Venice. A subsequent Venetian edition, 1541, and one printed at Naples about the same time, have been much mutilated and corrected, on account of the satire and reflections on monks and ecclesiastics, of which the tales of Massuccio are full: indeed, the professed object of the work, as the author declares, is to expose "*la guasta vita de finti Religiosi*."

The tales of Massuccio are divided into five parts, in each of which, at least in the three

raised the hillock over which the horse of King William stumbled.

<sup>2</sup> Il Novellino: nel quale si contengono cinquanta Novelle.



first, he seems to have had in view some particular maxim, which he meant to establish or illustrate. In the first part, which contains ten novels, the scope of the stories is to show that God will, sooner or later, inflict vengeance on dissolute monks, who in these tales are generally brought to shame from being detected at a rendezvous. The first in this division is the story of a monk killed by a jealous husband, on account of an affair of gallantry. In this tale the amusement consists in the schemes devised for getting rid of the dead body. The husband places it in an appendage to a monastery, where it was sure to be early discovered: it is there found by the prior, who carries it to the door of the murderer, and, after some other adventures, it is finally tied to a young and unbroken horse. A lance is placed in the hand, and a shield tied round the neck. Those on the street, recognising the monk, believe him to be mad, and attribute his death to the colt falling with him into a well. The origin of this tale is the fabliau entitled *Le Sacristain de Cluni* (*Le Grand*, iv. 252), or the thirty-first chapter of the *English Gesta Romanorum*. Strange as it may appear, this was a favourite tale both in France and England, and has been imitated by almost every novelist, and in all the languages of Europe.

The principal object of the second part is to prove that the monks of those days invented many frauds to draw money from the credulous, and that in return they were often cozened by laymen. Thus, two Neapolitan sharpers had stolen a purse from a Genoese merchant. Having despoiled the unfortunate man, they arrived at Sienna, where the good St Bernardin was preaching with all possible effect and edification. One of the cheats addressed the holy man with a hypocritical air. "My reverend father," said he, "I am poor but honest: I have a very timorous and delicate conscience; here is a purse which some one has lost and I have found. I would give a great deal, if I had aught, to discover the owner, in order to restore it to him, but my honesty is all my property. I pray you to announce in your first discourse that if any one has lost this purse he may reclaim it; you can restore it to him, for I place it in your hands." The priest, as requested, made known

the matter in his next sermon. On this the accomplice of the knave presented himself, as had been agreed on with his comrade, and claimed the purse. As he detailed exactly what it contained, his right to it was not doubted, and the priest gave it to him with a strong recommendation to bestow a part on the honest man who had restored it; but the pretended owner declared he could not afford to part with any thing, and left the church, carrying the purse along with him. The saint believing that the conscientious finder remained in want, solicited for him the charity of the congregation; every one was eager to recompense him, and the subscription was so large, that next day, when the Genoese merchant arrived to claim his purse, the preacher and his congregation could bestow on him nothing but their benediction.

The fourteenth tale, however, is on a different topic from the former ones of the second part; it is the story of a young gentleman of Messina, who becomes enamoured of the daughter of a rich Neapolitan miser. As the father kept his child perpetually shut up, the lover has recourse to stratagem. Pretending to set out on a long journey, he deposits with the miser a number of valuable effects, leaving, among other things, a female slave, who prepossesses the mind of the girl in favour of her master, and finally assists in the elopement of the young lady, and the robbery of her father's jewels, which she carries along with her. It has already been shown that the stories of the bond and of the caskets in the *Merchant of Venice* were borrowed from Italian novels, nor is it improbable that the avaricious father in this tale, the daughter so carefully shut up, the elopement of the lovers managed by the intervention of a servant, the robbery of the father, and his grief on the discovery, which is represented as divided between the loss of his daughter and ducats, may have suggested the third plot in Shakspeare's drama—the love and elopement of Jessica and Lorenzo.

The third book, which, like the preceding ones, consists of ten stories, is intended to show that the greatest and finest ladies of Italy, in the author's time, indulged in gallantries of a nature which did them very little honour indeed. Of these tales, the heroes are, for



the most part, grooms, negroes, and muleteers.

In the twenty following stories of Massuccio there are related love adventures, which have sometimes a fortunate and sometimes a disastrous issue, and which are conducted to their termination by means occasionally ingenious, but always unlikely or incredible.

41. Is the story of two brothers from France, who, during their residence at Florence, fell in love with two sisters of that city. One of these sisters, though married, makes an assignation with her lover, and while she remains with him during night his brother is sent to lie down by the husband, that the blank may not be perceived. Day-light approaches without any prospect of his being relieved from this uncomfortable and precarious situation. At length the whole family bursts in with lights, when he is informed that the husband is from home, and is much tantalised on discovering that he has passed the night with the unmarried sister of whom he was enamoured. I have mentioned this story as it has been copied in one of the novels of Scarron—*La Precaution inutile*. It is also the second novel of Parabosco, and it is, perhaps, more probable that Scarron borrowed from him than from Massuccio, because in Parabosco, as in the French tale, the scene is laid in Spain, and not in Italy. It also suggested the incidents of one of the *Novelas Exemplares* of Cervantes, the story of Don Lewis de Castro and Rodrigo de Montalvo, in *Guzman d' Alfarache* (Part ii. c. 4), and the plot of the *Little French Lawyer* in Beaumont and Fletcher, which, next to *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, is generally considered as the best of their comedies.

45. A Castilian scholar, passing through Avignon to Bologna, bribes the good-will of a lady of some rank at the former place. He grievously repents the price he had paid, and farther prosecuting his journey towards Italy, meets at an inn with the lady's husband, who was returning to France. This gentleman inquires the cause of his distress; and the scholar, after some hesitation, not knowing who he is informs him of his adventure at Avignon, and the name of the lady who was concerned in it. The husband, with much entreaty, prevails on his new-acquired friend to

return to Avignon, where he is not a little disconcerted at being conducted to sup at a house which he had so much cause to remember. After a splendid entertainment, the husband upbraids his wife with her conduct, compels her to return the ill-gained money to the scholar, dismisses him with much civility, and afterwards secretly poisons his wife. Part of this story has probably been suggested by the second of the first day of the *Pecorone*. (See p. 248.)

The origin of Shakspeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has generally been referred to the *Giuletta* of Luigi da Porto. This tale Mr Douce has attempted to trace as far back as the Greek romance by Xenophon Ephesius; but when it is considered that this work was not published in the lifetime of Luigi da Porto, I do not think the resemblance so strong as to induce us to believe that it was seen by that novelist. His *Giuletta* is evidently borrowed from the thirty-third novel of Massuccio, which must unquestionably be regarded as the ultimate origin of the celebrated drama of Shakspeare, though it has escaped, as far as I know, the notice of his numerous commentators. In the story of Massuccio, a young gentleman, who resided in Sienna, is privately married by a friar to a lady of the same place, of whom he was deeply enamoured. Mariotto, the husband, is forced to fly from his country, on account of having killed one of his fellow-citizens in a squabble on the streets. An interview takes place between him and his wife before the separation. After the departure of Mariotto, Giannozza, the bride, is pressed by her friends to marry: she discloses her perplexing situation to the friar, by whom the nuptial ceremony had been performed. He gives her a soporific powder, which she drinks dissolved in water; and the effect of this narcotic is so strong that she is believed to be dead by her friends, and interred according to custom. The accounts of her death reach her husband in Alexandria, whither he had fled, before the arrival of a special messenger, who had been despatched by the friar to acquaint him with the real posture of affairs. Mariotto forthwith returns in despair to his own country, and proceeds to lament over the tomb of his bride. Before this time she had recovered



from her lethargy, and had set out for Alexandria in quest of her husband, who meanwhile is apprehended and executed for the murder he had formerly committed. Giannozza, finding he was not in Egypt, returns to Sienna, and learning his unhappy fate, retires to a convent, where she soon after dies. The catastrophe here is different from the novel of Luigi da Porto and the drama of Shakspeare, but there is a perfect correspondence in the preliminary incidents. The tale of Massuccio was written about 1470, which was long prior to the age of Luigi da Porto, who died in 1531, or of Cardinal Bembo, to whom some have attributed the greater part of the composition. Nor was it published till some years after the death of Luigi, having been first printed at Venice in 1535. It afterwards appeared in 1539, and lastly at Vicenza, 1731, 4to. These different editions vary as to some trifling incidents, but in all the principal circumstances, except those of the catastrophe, the novel of Luigi da Porto coincides with that of Massuccio. In the dedication Luigi says, that while serving as a soldier in Friuli, the tale was related to him by one of his archers (who always attended him) to beguile the solitary road that leads from Gradisca to Udino. In this story the lovers are privately married by a friar. Romeo is obliged to fly on account of the murder of a Capulet. After his departure the bride's relations insist on giving her in marriage. She drinks a soporific powder dissolved in water, and is subsequently buried. The news of her death come to Romeo before the messenger sent by the friar. He hastens to the tomb of Giuletta, and there poisons himself; she awakens from her trance before his death; he soon after expires, and Giuletta dies of grief. It is said in Johnson's Shakspeare, that this story is related as a true one in Girolamo de la Corte's History of Verona. It is also told as a matter of fact in the ninth of the second part of Bandello, which corresponds precisely with the tale of Luigi da Porto. Bandello's novel is dedicated to the celebrated Fracastoro, and the incident is said to have happened in the time of Bartolommeo de la Scala. Luigi da Groto, surnamed the Cieco d'Adria, one of the early romantic poets of Italy, who wrote a drama on this subject, declares, that his plot

was founded on the ancient annals of his country. In his drama the princess of Adria is in love with Latinus, who was the son of her father's bitterest enemy, and had slain her brother in battle. The princess is offered in marriage to the king of the Sabines: in this distress she consults a magician, who administers an opiate. She is soon after found apparently dead, and her body is deposited in the royal sepulchre. Latinus, hearing of her decease, poisons himself, and comes in the agonies of death to the tomb of the princess. She awakens, and a tender scene ensues—the lover expires in the arms of his mistress, who immediately stabs herself. In this play there is a garrulous old nurse, and it appears, from the coincidence of several passages pointed out by Mr Walker in his Memoir on Italian Tragedy, that the drama of Luigi da Groto must have been seen by Shakspeare. The story of Romeo and Juliet, which was thus popular and prevalent in Italy, passed at an early period into France. It was told in the introduction to a French translation of Boccaccio's *Philocopo* by Adrian Sevin, published in 1542, and is there related of two Slavonians who resided in the Morea. The lover kills his mistress's brother: he is forced to fly, but promises to return and run off with her: she meanwhile persuades a friar to give her a soporific potion for the convenience of elopement. A vessel is procured by the lover, but, not knowing the lady's part of the stratagem, he is struck with despair at beholding her funeral on landing. He follows the procession to the place of interment, and there stabs himself; when his mistress awakens she stabs herself also. From Bandello the tale was transferred into the collection of tragic stories by Belleforest, and published at Lyons, 1564. In this country it was inserted in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, but it was from the metrical history of *Romeus and Juliet* that Shakspeare chiefly borrowed his plot, as has been shown by many minute points of resemblance. It was by this composition that he was so wretchedly misled in his catastrophe, as to omit the incident of Juliet being roused before the death of her husband, which is the only novel and affecting circumstance in the tale of Luigi da Porto, and the only one in which he has excelled Massuccio. From



the garbled and corrupt translations to which he had recourse, the English dramatist has seldom improved on the incidents of the Italian novels. His embellishments consist in the beauty and justness of his sentiments, and the magic of his language.

Besides the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakspeare, and the Italian play already mentioned, there are two Spanish dramas on the subject of *Romeo and Juliet*; one by Fernando Roxas, who was contemporary with Shakspeare, and the other by the celebrated Lopez de Vega. The former coincides precisely with *Romeo and Juliet*; in the latter, the names are changed, and the catastrophe is totally different. Thus the lover, who corresponds to *Romeo*, comes to lament at the tomb of his mistress, but without having taken poison, and the lady having recovered from the effects of the soporific draught, they fly to an old uninhabited chateau belonging to her father, which he seldom visited. Meanwhile the father resolves to console himself for the loss of his daughter by entering into a second marriage, and goes to celebrate the nuptial festival at the castle where the lovers had sought refuge. On his first arrival he beholds his daughter, and supposing her to be a spirit, he is struck with remorse. The lady aids the deception, reproaches him as the cause of her death, and declares that he can only obtain pardon by reconciling himself to her injured lover. On his sudden appearance the old man declares, that were his daughter yet alive, he would willingly bestow her on him in marriage; and the fond pair embrace this favourable opportunity of throwing themselves at the feet of the father, to claim fulfilment of his promise.

#### SABADINO DELLI ARIENTI,<sup>1</sup>

who comes next to Massuccio in the chronological order of Italian novelists, was a citizen of Bologna, and a man of some note in his own district. He is said to have been a great classical scholar, and to have written a valuable history of his native city. His tales, which are dedicated to Duke Hercules of Ferrara, are entitled *Le Porrettane*, because, as the author

informs us, they were written for the amusement of the ladies and gentlemen who one season attended the baths of Porretta in the vicinity of Bologna. The date of the composition of these stories is supposed to be nearly the same with that of the first edition, which was published in 1483 at Bologna: Since that time there have been four or five impressions, the latest of which is earlier than the middle of the 16th century. Of the seventy-one novels which this author has written, some describe tragical events, but the greater number are light and pleasant adventures, or merely repartees and bon-mots. All of them are written in a style which is accounted barbarous, being full of Lombard phrases and expressions.

The fourth of Sabadino is from the eighth of Petrus Alphonsus, where a vine-dresser's wife is engaged with a gallant while her husband works in his vineyard. The husband returns, having wounded one eye, but the woman, by kissing him on the other, contrives her lover's escape. This is the forty-fourth of Malespini, twenty-third of Bandello, and sixteenth of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*. It also occurs in the *Arcadia di Brenta* (p. 131); the *Contes du Sieur d'Ouville*, &c. &c.

20. Is a tolerable story of a knavish citizen of Araldo, who borrows twenty ducats from a notary. As the citizen refused to pay at the time he promised, and as no evidence existed of the loan, he is summoned, at the solicitation of the notary, to be examined before the Podestà. He alleges to his creditor, as an excuse for not appearing, that his clothes are in pawn, an obstacle which the notary removes by lending him his cloak. Thus equipped he proceeds to the hall of justice, and is examined apart from his creditor by the magistrate. He positively denies the debt, and attributes the charge to a strange whim which had lately seized the notary, of thinking every thing his own property: "For instance," continues he, "if you ask him whose mantle this is that I wear, he will instantly lay claim to it." The notary being called in and questioned, answers of course as his debtor foretold, and is, in consequence, accounted a

<sup>1</sup> *Le Porrettane*, dove si tratta di settantuna Novelle, con amorosissimi documenti e dichiarazione

dell'anima; con una disputa e sentenza chi debba tenere il primo luogo il Dottore, o il Cavaliere, &c.



madman by all who are present. The judge orders the poor man to be taken care of, and the defendant is allowed to retain both the ducats and mantle.

59. A gentleman of the illustrious family of Bolognini in Italy, entered into the service of Ladislaus, King of Sicily, and became a great favourite of his master. Being his huntsman, falconer, and groom, besides prime minister, he met with many accidents in the course of his employments: one day his eye was struck out by a branch of a tree, and on another occasion he was rendered lame for the rest of his life by falling over a precipice. His address, however, remained, and his knowledge of the art of succeeding in a court. On one occasion, while following Ladislaus to Naples, the bark in which he sailed was separated in a storm from the king's vessel, and seized by corsairs, who carried him to Barbary, and disposed of him to certain Arabians. By them he was conveyed to the most remote part of their deserts, and sold, under the name of Eliseo, to an idolatrous monarch in that region. At first he kept his master's camels, but rose by degrees to be his vizier and favourite. He filled this situation a long time, but at length the king died. It was the custom of the country, on an occasion of that sort, to cut the throats of all those who had discharged high employments about the person of the monarch, and inter them along with their master. Eliseo, of course, was an indispensable character at this ceremony. In an assembly of the great council and people, which was held preparatory to its celebration, he thus addressed them:—"My lords and gentlemen, I would esteem myself too happy to follow my master to the other world, but you perceive that being blind and lame, and of a delicate constitution, I cannot render him services so effectual as some other lords and gentlemen present, who are strong and well-made, and who, besides, having the use of their limbs, will reach him much earlier than I can. I am only fit for conversation, and to bring him the news of the state. After the funeral ceremonies, in which the great officers of his deceased majesty will readily officiate, you will choose a king. I had best postpone my departure till the election is over, and bear the respects of the new sove-

reign to his predecessor." He then enlarged on the qualities which their future monarch should possess, and said such fine and popular things on this subject, that he not only obtained the respite he solicited, but was unanimously chosen king after the interment of the late sovereign and the officers of his household. Every nation has been fond of relating stories of the advancement of their countrymen in foreign lands by the force of talents. In this country, Turkey has generally been fixed on as the theatre of promotion. The above stories may, perhaps, appear dull to the reader; they are, nevertheless, a very favourable specimen of the merit and originality of Sabadino.

This author was the last of the Italian novelists who wrote in the 15th century, and

#### AGNOLO FIRENZUOLA

is the first of the succeeding age. This writer was an inhabitant of Florence, and an abbot of Vallombrosa; but his novels, which are ten in number, are not such as might be expected from his clerical situation. Most of them are interwoven in his *Ragionamenti*, printed at Florence, 1548. He tells us that a mistress, who lived with him, intended *tessere ragionamenti*, but that she died of a fever before she could execute this design, which, while on her death-bed, she solicited him to accomplish. This story is probably feigned, but it seems a singular fiction for an ecclesiastic.

The first tale of Firenzuola, is one that has become very common in modern novels and romance. A young man being shipwrecked on the coast of Barbary, is picked up by some fishermen, and sold to the bashaw of Tunis. He there becomes a great favourite of his master, and still more of his mistress, whom he persuades not only to assist in his escape, but to accompany him in his flight. The seventh is a story repeated in many of the Italian novels. A person lays out a sum to be paid as the dowry of a young woman when she is married. The mother, in order to get hold of this money, comes to the benefactor, accompanied by her daughter, and a person who assumed the character of husband. The donor insists that the new-married couple



should remain all night in his house, and assigns them the same apartment. Firenzuola had this story from the fourteenth of Fortini, and it has been imitated in the novels of Grazzini, called *Le Lasca* (Part 2. N. 10). Most of the other tales of Firenzuola, in which the chief characters are nuns and monks, can hardly be extracted. They are all, however, accounted remarkable for that elegance of style which distinguishes the works of Firenzuola. These consist of two dialogues on beauty, a few comedies, and a free translation of the *Ass of Apuleius*.

About the same time with Firenzuola lived Luigi da Porto, whose novel has already been mentioned, and the celebrated Molza, who wrote a hundred novels, all of which have been lost except four, and none of them, while extant, obtained a reputation equal to his other works. Nearly at the same period in which Molza and Firenzuola flourished,

#### GIOVANNI BREVIO,

a Venetian canon of Ceneda, wrote six novels, which were accounted remarkable for the liveliness of their style. They were published at Rome along with his *Rime* in 1545, 8vo. The first is the story of a lady who brought a lover to her house during the absence of her husband, who, returning unexpectedly, is surprised at the preparations for a supper, and in the heat of resentment upbraids his wife, and throws every thing into confusion. Meanwhile the lover had fled unseen to the house of a neighbour, who, at his solicitation, came with him and reproached the husband for breaking up a party he was entertaining, and for whose accommodation the lady had favoured him with the loan of the house.

2. A priest extorts money by passing for a cardinal.

3. Is the story of a father ruined by the extravagance of children, who afterwards neglect him. He pretends he has found a treasure. They treat him well for the rest of his life, but find empty coffers at his death. It is difficult to understand what comfort the father could receive in the attention or caresses of such a family. This novel is the subject of Piron's comedy of the *Fils Ingrats*, afterwards published by him under the title

of *L'Ecole des Peres*, the representation of which, in 1728, was the epoch of the revival of the *Comedie Larmoiante*. In the drama, however, the fiction of the treasure is invented by the father's valet, and entraps the young men into a restitution of the wealth they had obtained, in order to get the whole by this proof of disinterested affection. The story is also in the *Pieuses Recreations d'Angelin Gazeé*, and is told in the *Colloquia Mensalia* of Luther, among other examples, to deter fathers from dividing their property during life among their children—a practice to which they are in general little addicted.

4. Is the renowned tale of Belfagor. This story, with merely a difference of names, was originally told in an old Latin MS., which is now lost, but which, till the period of the civil wars in France, remained in the library of Saint Martin de Tours. But whether Brevio or Machiavel first exhibited the tale in an Italian garb, has been a matter of dispute among the critics of their country. It was printed by Brevio during his life, and under his own name, in 1545; and with the name of Machiavel, in 1549, which was about eighteen years after that historian's death. Both writers probably borrowed the incidents from the Latin MS., for they could scarcely have copied from each other. The story is besides in the *Nights of Straparola*, but much mutilated; and has also been imitated by Fontaine. The following is the outline of the tale, as related by Machiavel. All the souls which found their way to hell, complained that they had been brought to that melancholy predicament by means of their wives: Minos and Rhadamanthus reported the case to Pluto, who summoned an infernal council to consult on the best mode of ascertaining the truth or falsehood of such statements. After some deliberation it was determined that one of their number should be sent into the world, endowed with a human form, and subjected to human passions; that he should be ordered to choose a wife as early as possible, and after remaining above ground for ten years, should report to his infernal master the benefits and burdens of matrimony. Though this plan was unanimously approved, none of the fiends were disposed voluntarily to undertake the commission, but the lot at length fell on the



arch-demon Belfagor. Having received the endowments of a handsome person, and abundant wealth, he settled in Florence under the name of Roderic of Castile, and gave out that he had acquired his fortune in the east. As he was a well-bred gentleman-like demon, he found no difficulty in being introduced to the first families of the place, and of obtaining in marriage a young woman of high rank and unblemished reputation. The expense of fine clothes and furniture, for which his wife had a taste, he did not grudge, but as her family were in indifferent circumstances, he was obliged to fit out her brothers for the Levant. His lady, too, being somewhat of a scold, no servant remained long with him, and all were of course more anxious to waste than save their master's substance. Finally, being disappointed in his hopes of obtaining remittances from his brothers-in-law, he is forced to escape from his creditors. During their pursuit he is for some time concealed by a peasant, whose fortune he promises to make in return. Having disclosed to him the secret of his real name and origin, he undertakes to possess the daughter of a rich citizen of Florence, and not to leave her till the peasant comes to her relief. As soon as the countryman hears of the young lady's possession, he repairs to her father's house, and promises to cure her by a certain form of exorcism. He then approaches the ear of the damsel; "Roderic," says he, "I am come, remember your promise." "I shall," whispers he; "and, to make you still richer, after leaving this girl I shall possess the daughter of the king of Naples." The peasant obtains so much fame by this cure, that he is sent for to the Neapolitan princess, and receives a handsome reward for the expulsion of Belfagor. At his departure the demon reminds him that he has fulfilled his promise, and that he is now determined to effect his ruin. In prosecution of this plan he possesses the daughter of Lewis VII. of France, and, as he anticipated, the peasant is immediately sent for. A scene is here described, resembling that in the fabliau *Le Vilain Medecin*, and Moliere's *Medecin malgré lui*. The rustic was forcibly carried to the capital of France, and, on his arrival, he in vain represented that certain demons were so obdurate they could not be expelled. The king plainly stated,

that he must either cure his daughter or be hanged. All his private entreaties being unable to prevail on Belfagor to dislodge, he had recourse to stratagem. He ordered a scaffold, with an altar to be erected, whither the princess was conducted, and mass performed, all which preparations Belfagor treated with profound contempt. In the middle of the ceremonies, however, as had been previously arranged, a great band, with drums and trumpets, approached with much clamour on one side. "What is this?" said Belfagor; "O, my dear Roderic," answered the peasant, "there is your wife coming in search of you." At these words Belfagor leaped out of the princess, and descended to hell to confirm the statement, the truth of which he had been commissioned to ascertain.

The notion of this story is ingenious, and might have been productive of entertaining incident, had Belfagor been led, by his connubial connexion, from one crime to another. But Belfagor is only unfortunate, and in no respect guilty: nor did any thing occur during his abode on earth, that testified the power of woman in leading us to final condemnation. The story of the peasant, and the possession of the princesses, bears no reference to the original idea with which the tale commences, and has no connexion with the object of the infernal deputy's terrestrial sojourn.

This novel has suggested the plot of an old English comedy, called *Grim, the Collier of Croydon*, printed 1602; and also *Belphegor, or the Marriage of the Devil*, 1691.

#### GIROLAMO PARABOSCO,<sup>1</sup>

who lived about the year 1550, was a celebrated musician, and a poet like most of the other Italian novelists. Though born at Placentium, he passed the greater part of his life at Venice, where he acquired that intimate acquaintance with the manners of the inhabitants which is conspicuous in his work. His tales commence with an eulogy on that city, which he makes the theatre of their relation. He feigns that seventeen gentlemen, among whom were Peter Aretine, and Speron Speroni, agreed, according to a custom at

<sup>1</sup> *Diparti di Girolamo Parabosco.*



Venice, to pass a few days in huts erected in the water, for the amusement of fishing, at a short distance from the city. The weather proving unfavourable for that diversion on their first arrival, they employed themselves with relating tales. This entertainment continued for three days, and, as each gentleman tells a story, the whole number amounts to seventeen. These, intermixed with songs and reflections, were published first at Venice without date, and afterwards at the same place in 1552 and 1558. Some of these stories are tragical, and others comical. Though there were no ladies present, and Peter Aretine was of the party, the tales are less immoral than most imitations of Boccaccio. It is needless, however, to give any examples, as they are of the same species with other Italian novels—had little influence on subsequent compositions, and possess no great interest or originality: thus, the 2d of Parabosco coincides with the 41st of Massuccio; the 4th has been suggested by the 10th of the 4th day of Boccaccio; the 1st part of the 5th is from the Meunier d' Aleus, through the medium of the 106th of Sacchetti, the 2d part is from the 8th of the 8th day of the Decameron, &c. &c. There are nine stories in the first day of Parabosco, and seven in the second, which concludes with the discussion of four questions, as whether there is most pleasure in hope or enjoyment. In the third day there is only one tale, and the rest of the time is occupied with the relation of bon-mots, which are methodically divided into the defensive, aggressive, &c. They are in general very indifferent: a musician playing in a brutal company, is told he is an Orpheus. A man performing on a lute asserts he had never learnt to play, and is desired to reserve his assurances for those who suppose he has. One boasted he knew a knave by sight, whence it is inferred by a person present that he must have often studied his mirror, &c. &c. Though Parabosco has only left seventeen novels, it would appear that he had intended to favour the public with a hundred, which must have been nearly ready for publication from what he says in one of his letters:—"Spero fra pochi giorni mandar fuori Cento Novelle; diciassette delle quali per ora n' ho mandato in questi miei Diporti."

MARCO CADEMOSTO DA LODI<sup>1</sup>

was an ecclesiastic, and lived in the Roman court during the pontificates of Leo X. and Clement VII., by both of whom he was patronised. His six novels were printed at Rome in 1543, along with his *rime*, for he too was a poet like the other Italian novelists. He informs us in his Proœmium, that he had lost twenty-seven tales he had written during the sack of Rome, all of which were founded on fact: of the six that remain, the only one that is tolerable is that of an old man, who, by will, leaves his whole fortune to hospitals. An ancient and faithful servant of the family having learned the nature of this iniquitous testament, informs his master's sons. In the course of the night on which the old gentleman dies, he is removed to another room, and the domestic, in concert with the young men, lies down in his place; he then sends for a notary, and dictates a will in favour of his master's sons, bequeathing himself, to their no small disappointment, an enormous legacy.

We shall be detained but a short while with the remaining Italian novelists, as they have in a great measure only imitated their predecessors, and frequently indeed merely repeated, in different language, what had formerly been told.

The succeeding novelists are chiefly distinguished from those who had gone before them by more frequent employment of sanguinary incidents, and the introduction of scenes of incredible atrocity and accumulated horrors. None of their number have carried these to greater excess than

GIOVANNI GIRALDI CINTHIO,<sup>2</sup>

author of the Ecatommithi, and the earliest of the remaining novelists, who, from their merit or popularity, are at all worthy of being mentioned. Cinthio was born at Ferrara, early in the 16th century; he was secretary to Hercules II., duke of Ferrara, and was a scholar and poet of some eminence. His death happened in 1573, but farther notices concerning his life may be found in Barotti's

<sup>1</sup> Sonetti ed altre rime, con alcune Novelle.

<sup>2</sup> Hecatommithi, ovvero Cento Novelle di Giraldo Cinthio.



Defence of the Ferrarese Authors against the Censure of Fontanini. It would appear from an address with which he concludes, that his tales had been written at an early period of life, and retouched after a long interval :—

Poscia ch' a te, lavor de miei primi anni,  
Accio c' habbia nel duol qualche ristoro,  
Mi chiaman nell età grave gli affanni, &c.

and again,

Dunque se stata sei gran tempo occolta,  
O de miei giovenili anni fatica,  
In cui studio già posi, e cura molta.

The novels of Cinthio were first printed in 1565, at Montreal, in Sicily, 2 vols. 8vo ; afterwards at Venice, 1566 ; and thirdly, at the same place, in 1574. Though the title of *Hecatommithi* imports, that the book contains a hundred tales, it in fact consists of a hundred and ten ; as there are ten stories in the introduction which precedes the first decade. The whole work is divided into two parts, each of which includes five decades, and every decade, as the name implies, comprehends ten stories.

The introduction contains examples of the happiness of connubial, and the miseries of illicit love. The first decade is miscellaneous ; 2. Histories of amours carried on in opposition to the will of relatives or superiors ; 3. Of the infidelity of wives and husbands ; 4. Of those who, laying snares for others, accomplish their own ruin ; 5. Examples of connubial fidelity in trying circumstances ; 6. Acts of generosity and courtesy ; 7. Bon-mots and sayings ; 8. Examples of ingratitude ; 9. Remarkable vicissitudes of fortune ; 10. *Atti di Cavalleria*.

Cinthio deduces the relation of these multifarious tales from the sack of Rome in 1527. He feigns, that on account of the confusion and pestilence by which that event was followed, ten ladies and gentlemen sailed for Marseilles, and, during the voyage, related stories for each other's entertainment. Thus, in many external circumstances, Cinthio has imitated Boccaccio ; as, in the escape from the pestilence, which is the cause of the relation of many Italian novels—the number of the tales—the Greek appellation bestowed on them, and the limitation to a particular sub-

ject during each day. In the tales, however, little resemblance can be traced. The style of Cinthio is laboured, while extravagance and improbability are the chief characteristics of his incidents. It is asserted, in a preface to the third edition of the *Ecatommithi*, that all the stories are founded on fact ; but certainly none of the Italian novels have less that appearance, except where he has ransacked the ancient histories of Greece and Rome for horrible events. At the end of the 5th decade, the story of Lucretia is told of a Dalmatian lady. The 3d of the 8th decade, where a Scythian princess agrees with her sister's husband to murder their consorts, and afterwards ascend the throne, by poisoning the old king, over whose dead body his guilty daughter drives her chariot, is nothing more than the story of Tullia and Lucius Tarquinius Superbus. Sometimes Cinthio has only given a dark and gloomy colouring to the inventions of preceding novelists. For example, the 4th of the 4th decade is just the story of Richard Minutolo in the *Decameron* (see p. 218), except that the contriver of the fraud is a villainous slave, instead of a gay and elegant gentleman, and that the lady, on the artifice being discovered, stabs the traitor and herself, in place of being reconciled to her lover, as represented by Boccaccio.

Of the stories which are his own invention, the 2d tale of the 2d decade is a striking example of those incidents of accumulated horror and atrocity, in which Cinthio seems to have chiefly delighted, and which border on the ludicrous when carried to excess. Orbecche, daughter of Sulmone, King of Persia, fell in love with a young Armenian, called Orontes, and for his sake refused the hand of the Prince of Parthia, who had been selected as her husband by her father. Sulmone long remained ignorant of the cause of her disobedience, but at last discovered that she was privately married to Orontes, and had two children by him. The unfortunate family escape from his vengeance, and resided for nine years in an enemy's country. At the end of this period Sulmone feigned that he had forgiven his daughter, and persuaded her husband to come to the capital of Persia with his two children, but embraced an opportunity of making away



with them at the first interview. On the arrival of his daughter, who followed her husband to Persia, he received her with apparent tenderness, and informed her he had prepared a magnificent nuptial present. He then invited her to lift a veil which concealed three basons. In one of these she found the head of her husband, and in the two others the bodies of her children, and the poniards with which they had been slain still remaining in their throats. Orbecche seized the daggers, presented them to her father, and begged he would complete his vengeance. The king returned them with a ghastly composure, assuring her that no farther revenge was desired by him. This *sang froid*, which seemed so ill warranted by circumstances, exasperated Orbecche to such a degree, that she threw herself on her father, and forthwith despatched him. No other person now remaining to be massacred (as her mother and brother had been slain by Sulmone, in the early part of his reign), she plunged one of the poniards into her own bosom. On this tale, as on several others of the Ecatommithi, the author himself has founded a tragedy, which is one of the most ancient and most esteemed in the Italian language.

The 7th of the 3d decade, which is much in the same style, though more interesting and pathetic, has furnished Shakspeare with the plot of the tragedy of Othello. Desdemona, a Venetian lady, being struck with admiration at the noble qualities of a Moor, called Othello, married him in defiance of her kindred, and accompanied him to Cyprus, where he had received a high command from the republic. The Moor's standard-bearer, or *ancient*, who was a great favourite of his master, became enamoured of Desdemona. Exasperated at her refusal to requite his affection, and jealous of the Moor's captain whom he believed to be her favoured lover, he resolved on the destruction of both. The captain having been deprived of his command, for some military offence, and the ensign understanding that Desdemona solicited her husband with much earnestness for his restoration, seized this opportunity of instilling suspicion into the mind of the Moor. He afterwards stole a handkerchief which she had received from her husband, and which

the ensign informed him had been bestowed on the captain. The jealousy of the Moor received strength, when, on asking his wife for the handkerchief, he found she was unable to produce it, and was confirmed by the ensign afterwards contriving to show it to the Moor in the hands of a woman in the captain's house. Othello now resolved on the death of his wife and the captain. The ensign was employed in the murder of the latter: he failed in the attempt, but afterwards, in concert with the Moor, despatched Desdemona, and pulled down part of the house, that it might be believed she had been crushed in its ruins. Soon after Othello conceived a violent hatred against the ensign, and deprived him of the situation he held. Enraged at this treatment, he revealed to the senate the crimes of his master, who was in consequence recalled from Cyprus. The torture to which he was brought had no effect in extorting a confession. Banishment, consequently, was the only penalty inflicted, but he was afterwards privately murdered in the place of his exile by the relations of Desdemona. The ensign subsequently expired on the rack, to which he was put for a crime totally unconnected with the main subject of the novel.

It may be remarked, that in the drama of Shakspeare, Iago is not urged on, as in Cinthio, by love turned to hatred, but by a jealousy of the Moor and his own wife, and resentment at the promotion of Cassio. He also employs his wife to steal the handkerchief, which in the novel he performs himself. On this theft the whole proof against Desdemona rests, both in the play and novel; but in the latter the Moor insists on seeing it in the captain's hands, and the ensign contrives to throw the handkerchief into the possession of the captain, which in the drama is the result of chance. The character also of the Moor is entirely the invention of the English poet. Shakspeare's noble Othello is in Cinthio sullen, obstinate, and cruel. The catastrophe, too, as was necessary for theatrical exhibition, has been greatly altered.

In all these important variations, Shakspeare has improved on his original. In a few other particulars he has deviated from it with less judgment; in most respects he has adhered with close imitation. The characters of Iago,



Desdemona, and Cassio, are taken from Cinthio with scarcely a shade of difference. The obscure hints and various artifices of the villain to raise suspicion in the Moor, are the same in the novel and the drama. That scene where Othello's jealousy is so much excited, by remarking the gestures of Cassio, is copied from the Italian, as also his singular demand of receiving ocular demonstration of the guilt of Desdemona.

The 10th novel of the 5th decade has furnished to Dryden that part of his tragedy of *Amboyna* which relates to the rape of *Isabinda* by *Harman*.

In the 6th of the 6th decade, we are told, that *Livia*, a noble Italian matron, had a son, who was unfortunately stabbed in a quarrel with a young man of his own age. His enemy flying from the officers of justice, unconsciously seeks and obtains refuge in the house of the mother of the deceased, who had not yet been informed of her son's fate. After she had given her word for the security of the fugitive, her son's dead body is brought home, and, by the arrival of the officers in pursuit, she discovers that she harboured his murderer. From a strict sense of honour she refuses to deliver him up, and about half an hour afterwards adopts him in the room of the child she had lost. This story is the underplot of *Beaumont and Fletcher's Custom of the Country*, where *Guiomar*, a widow lady of *Lisbon*, protects *Rutilio* when she supposed that he had killed her son *Duarte*, whom he had left for dead, after a scuffle in the streets. *Don Duarte*, however, recovering from his wound, the lady accepts *Rutilio* as her husband. Part of *Cibber's comedy, Love makes a Man*, is founded on a similar incident.

The 5th novel of the 8th decade, which has suggested the comedy of *Measure for Measure*, is equally sanguinary and improbable with the story of the Moor. A young man of *Inspruck* is condemned to be beheaded for having ravished a young woman in that city. His sister goes to solicit his pardon from the chief magistrate, who was reputed a man of austere virtue and rigid justice. On certain conditions he agrees to grant her request, but these being fulfilled, he presents her on the morning which followed her compliance with the corpse of her brother. The

emperor *Maximin* having been informed of this atrocious conduct, commands the magistrate to marry the woman he had betrayed, that she might be entitled to his wealth. He then orders the head of the culprit to be struck off; but when the sentence is on the point of execution, the bridegroom is pardoned at the intercession of the lady he had been forced to espouse. Many stories of a villainy of this nature were current about the time that *Cinthio* wrote his *Ecatommithi*. A similar crime was, in the 15th and 16th centuries, believed of a favourite of *Lewis XI.* of France, and in the 17th chapter of *Stephens' Apology for Herodotus*, it is attributed to the *Prevost de la Vouste*; but there the lady sacrifices her honour for the sake of a husband, and not of a brother. We also read in *Lipsii Monita et Exempla Politica*, that *Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy*, executed one of his noblemen for an offence of this infernal description, but previously, as in the novel of *Cinthio*, compelled him to espouse the lady he had deceived,—a story which is related in the *Spectator* (No. 491). A like treachery, as every one knows, was at one period attributed to *Colonel Kirke*. The novel of *Cinthio* passed into the tragic histories of *Belleforest*. The immediate original, however, of *Measure for Measure*, was *Whetstone's play of Promos and Cassandra*, published in 1578. In that drama the crime of the brother is softened into seduction: Nor is he actually executed for his transgression, as a felon's head is presented in place of the one required by the magistrate. The king being complained to, orders the magistrate's head to be struck off, and the sister begs his life, even before she knows that her brother is safe. *Shakspeare* has adopted the alteration in the brother's crime, and the substitution of the felon's head. The preservation of the brother's life by this device might have been turned to advantage, as affording a ground for the intercession of his sister; but *Isabella* pleads for the life of *Angelo* before she knows her brother is safe, and when she is bound to him by no tie, as the duke does not order him to marry *Isabella*. From his own imagination *Shakspeare* has added the character of *Mariana*, *Angelo's* forsaken mistress, who saves the honour of the heroine by



being substituted in her place. Isabella, indeed, had refused, even at her brother's entreaty, to give up her virtue to preserve his life. This is an improvement on the incidents of the novel, as it imperceptibly diminishes our sense of the atrocity of Angelo, and adds dignity to the character of the heroine. The secret superintendence, too, of the duke over the whole transaction, has a good effect, and increases our pleasure in the detection of the villain. In the fear of Angelo, lest the brother should take revenge "for so receiving a dishonoured life, with ransom of such shame," Shakspeare has given a motive to conduct which, in his prototypes, is attributed to wanton cruelty.

The 9th of the 10th decade, which relates to an absurd competition between a Pisan general and his son for the reward assigned to the person who had performed the most gallant action against the enemy, is the foundation of Beaumont and Fletcher's tiresome tragedy, the *Laws of Candy*. That drama opens with a ridiculous competition between Cassilane, general of Candy, and his son Antinous, as to which had performed the noblest exploit against the Venetians: the soldiers and senate decide in favour of the son, who thus becomes entitled, by the laws of Candy, to claim whatever he chooses. He very foolishly demands that a huge brass statue of his father should be set up on the Capitol, and is persecuted by his jealous parent, during the three last acts, with unrelenting cruelty.

Of all the tragic stories of Cinthio, the only one truly pathetic is that of a mother who by mistake poisons her only son in administering a draught to him while sick. The death-bed scene, in which the father commits the boy to the care of his mother; the beautiful picture of maternal care and tenderness by which it is succeeded—her feverish anxiety during his illness—her heart-rending lamentations on discovery of the fatal error settling on his death into a black despair, which rejects all consolation, and thence, by a natural transition, rises to ungovernable phrensy, all wring the heart in a manner which leaves us to regret that this novelist had told so many stories of Scythian and Armenian tyrants, who massacre whole tribes and generations

without exciting the smallest sympathy or emotion.

All the tales of Cinthio, however, are not of the sanguinary and melancholy nature of those already mentioned. Some of them, though tragic in their commencement, have a happy conclusion, as the 6th of the 8th, in which the 68th of the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, and the *Fabliau D'un Roi, qui voulut faire bruler le fils de son Seneschal*, is applied to a Turkish bashaw and a christian slave (see p. 206).

The 8th of the 9th decade is the story of a widow lady, who concealed a treasure in her house during the siege of Carthage. A daughter of the Roman soldier who had obtained this mansion being disappointed in love, resolved to hang herself; but in trying the rope she removed a beam which discovered the treasure, and completely consoled her for all misfortunes. This story was transferred to Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, under name of the *Maids of Carthage*. It seems also to have suggested the concluding incident of the old ballad the *Heir of Linne*, and the second part of *Le fils de Medecin Sacan*, one of *Gueullette's Contes Tartares*.

Some of the novels of Cinthio are meagre examples of the generosity of the family of Este, and convince us that in the author's age nothing was more rare than genuine liberality. The 3d of the 6th decade, however, is a remarkable instance of the continence of a duke of Ferrara, which has been told, in Luther's *Colloquia Mensalia*, of the Emperor Charles V., and which I have also somewhere seen related of the Chevalier Bayard.

A few stories of this novelist are intended as comical. In the 3d of the 1st decade, a soldier travelling with a philosopher and astrologer, the wise men mistake their military companion for a silly fellow; and as they were reduced to a single loaf of bread, resolve to cozen him out of his share. They accordingly propose that it should belong to the person who experiences the most delightful dream in the course of the ensuing night. The soldier, who perceived their drift, rose while they were asleep, eat the loaf, and on the morrow reported this substantial incident, as the dream with which he had been favoured. This story corresponds precisely with the 18th



tale of Petrus Alphonsus, except that in the eastern original the actors are two citizens and a countryman : it is also related in *Historia Jeschuae Nazareni*, a life of our Saviour, of Jewish invention. From the sixteenth of Alphonsus, Cinthio has also derived a story (9th of 1st decade) of a merchant who loses a bag containing 400 crowns. He advertises it, with a reward to any one who finds it ; but when brought to him by a poor woman, he attempts to defraud her of the promised recompense, alleging that, besides the 400 crowns, it contained some ducats, which he had neglected to specify in the advertisement, and which she must have purloined. The Marquis of Mantua, to whom the matter is referred, decides, that as it wanted the ducats it could not be the merchant's, advises him again to proclaim his loss, and bestows on the poor woman the whole contents of the purse. In Alphonsus we have a philosopher instead of the Marquis of Mantua : the merchant, too, pretends that there were two golden serpents, though he had only advertised the loss of one, which made his deceit more flagrant, as the omission was less probable. This story has been imitated in innumerable tales and facetiae, both French and Italian.

The whole of the 7th decade consists of jests and repartees ; for example—The poet Dante dining at the table of Cane Della Scala, lord of Verona, that prince ingeniously contrived to throw all the bones which had been picked at table at the feet of Dante, and on the table being removed affected the utmost amazement at the appetite of a poet who had left such remains. "My lord," replied Dante, "had I been a *dog* (*cane*) you would not have found so many bones at my feet." Even this indifferent story is not original, being copied from the *Dantis Faceta Responsio* of Poggio, which again is merely an application to an Italian prince and poet of the *Fabliau Les Deux Parasites* (*Le Grand*, vol. iii. p. 95). The notion, however, of this absurd trick, is older even than the *Fabliau*, having been played, as Josephus informs us (*Book xii. c. 4*), on the Jew boy Hyrcanus while seated at the table of Ptolemy, King of Egypt : "And being asked how he came to have so many bones before him, he replied, 'Very rightfully, my lord : for they are dogs

that eat the flesh and bones together, as these thy guests have done, for there is nothing before them ; but they are men that eat the flesh and cast away the bones, as I have now done.' On which the king admired at his answer, which was so wisely made ; and bid them all make an acclamation, as a mark of their approbation of his jest, which was truly a facetious one."

Though both the comical and pathetic stories of the *Ecatommithi* be inferior to those introduced in the *Decameron*, the work of Cinthio ends perhaps more naturally. The termination of the voyage by the arrival at Marseilles is a better conclusion than the return to Florence. At the end of the whole there is a long poetical address, in which Cinthio has celebrated most of his eminent literary contemporaries in Italy, particularly Bernardo Tasso—

Compagno avendo il suo gentil Figliuolo.

Of all Italian novelists, Cinthio appears to have been the greatest favourite with our old English dramatists. We have already seen that two of the most popular of Shakspeare's plays were taken from his novels. Beaumont and Fletcher have been indebted to him for several of their plots ; and the incidents of many scattered scenes in the works of these dramatists, as also of Shirley, may be traced to the same source. That spirit, too, of atrocity and bloodshed, which characterises the *Ecatommithi*, fostered in England a similar taste, which has been too freely indulged by our early tragic writers, most of whom appear to have agreed in opinion with the author of *Les Amusemens de Muley Bugentuf*—"on auroit toujours vu perir dans mes tragedies non seulement les principaux personnages mais les gardes memes ; J' aurois egorgé jusques au souffleur." Horrible incidents, when extravagantly employed by the novelist or dramatic poet, are merely an abuse of art, to which they are driven by indigence of genius. It is easy to carry such repulsive atrocities to excess ; but, when thus accumulated, they rather excite a sense of ridicule, than either terror or sympathy. We shudder at the murder of Duncan, and weep at the death of Zara, but we can scarcely refrain from laughter at the last scenes of the *Andromana* of Shirley.



The next Italian novelist is

#### ANTON FRANCESCO GRAZZINI,

who was commonly called *Il Lasca* (Mullet), the appellation he assumed in the Academy degli Umidi, to which he belonged, where every member was distinguished by the name of a fish. *Lasca* was spawned at Florence in the beginning of the 16th century, and was one of the founders of the celebrated academy *Della Crusca*. He is said to have been a person of a lively and whimsical disposition: he resided chiefly at the place of his birth, where he also died in 1583. The account of his life, written by Anton Maria Biscioni, which is a complete specimen of the accuracy and controversial minuteness of Italian biography, is prefixed to his *Rime*, printed at Florence in 1741.

The novels of Grazzini are reckoned much better than his poetry; they are accounted very lively and entertaining, and the style has been considered by the Italian critics as remarkable for simplicity and elegance. These tales are divided into three evenings (*tre cene*). None of these parts were published till long after the death of the author. The second evening, containing ten stories, was first edited. It appeared at Florence in 1743, and afterwards, along with the first evening, which also comprehends ten stories, at Paris, though with the date of London, in 1756. Of the third part, only one tale has hitherto been published.

In order to introduce his stories, Grazzini feigns that one day towards the end of January, some time between the years 1540 and 1550, a party of four young men met after dinner at the house of a noble and rich widow of Florence, for the purpose of visiting her brother, who resided there at the time. This widow had four young female relatives who lived in the house with her. A snow storm coming on, the company amuse themselves in a court with throwing snow-balls. They afterwards assemble round the fire, and, as the storm increased, the gentlemen are prevailed on to stay to supper, and it is resolved to relate stories till the repast be ready. As the party had little time for preparation, the tales of

that evening are short; but at separating it is agreed that they should meet at the distance of a week and fortnight to relate stories more detailed in their circumstances. Although the tales are lost, or at least not edited, which may be presumed to have been the longest, those that are published are of greater length than most of the Italian tales. Of these, many consist of tricks or deceptions practised on fools or coxcombs, which are invariably exaggerated and improbable. The best story in the work, though not free from these defects, is the first of the second evening, which turns on the extreme resemblance of a peasant to a rich fool, who resided in his neighbourhood, and who is accidentally drowned while they are fishing together. The peasant equips himself in the clothes which his companion had left on the bank of the river when he went in to dive for fish, and runs to the nearest house, calling help for the poor countryman. When the body is found, it passes for the corpse of the rustic, who assumes the manners of the deceased, takes possession of his house, and enjoys this singular heirship till death, without discovering the imposture to any one except his wife, with whom he again performs the marriage ceremony. The relatives of the deceased are not surprised that their kinsman should espouse the widow of a peasant, but are astonished at those gleams of intelligence which occasionally burst forth in spite of counterfeited stupidity. Stories of this nature are not uncommon in fiction, and have all probably had their origin in the *Menechmi* of Plautus. Idiots seem to have been the favourite heroes of Grazzini: he has another story taken from one of the *Fabliaux*, or perhaps from Poggio's *Mortuus Loquens*, of a fool, who is persuaded by his wife that he is dead. He suffers himself to be carried out for interment, but springs up on hearing himself disrespectfully mentioned by some one who witnessed the funeral. The ninth of the second night coincides with the seventh of *Firenzuola*, and the tenth of the same evening with a tale of Fortini. The last story contains an account of a cruel, and by no means ingenious, trick practised by Lorenza de Medici on a physician of Florence.



## ORTENSIO LANDO,

a Milanese gentleman, was author of fourteen tales, inserted in his *Varii Componimenti*, printed at Venice, 1552, 8vo. The Italian writers inform us, that he early adopted the opinions of Luther, abandoned his country, and sought refuge in Germany. Little more is known concerning the incidents of the life of this heretical novelist. With regard to his tales, the author himself acquaints us that he imitated Boccaccio, which is the great boast of the novelists who wrote in the middle and towards the close of the 16th century; and of this resemblance they are as anxious to persuade their readers, as their predecessors had been to testify the truth and originality of their stories.

The chief excellence of the tales of Lando is said to consist in the grace and facility of the diction in which they are clothed. The 13th, however, though it wants the merit of originality, being taken from the fabliau of *La Houce partie*, published by Barbazan, possesses, I think, intrinsic excellence. A Florentine merchant, who had been extremely rich, becoming sickly and feeble, and being no longer of any service to his family, in spite of his intercessions, was sent by his son to the hospital. The cruelty of this conduct made a great noise in the city, and the son, more from shame than affection, despatched one of his own children, who was about six years of age, with a couple of shirts to his grandfather. On his return he was asked by his parent if he had executed the commission. "I have only taken one shirt," replied he. "Why so?" asked the father. "I have kept the other," said the child, "for the time when I shall send you to the hospital." This answer had the effect of despatching the unnatural son to beg his father's pardon, and to conduct him home from his wretched habitation.

## GIOVAN FRANCESCO STRAPAROLA

is not one of the most esteemed Italian novelists, but none of them are more curious for illustrating the genealogy of fiction. Straparola was born at Carravaggio, but resided chiefly at Venice. The first part of his work, which he has been pleased to entitle *Tredecim*

*piacevoli* notte, was printed at Venice in 1550, 8vo, and the second part at the same place, 1554. These were followed by four editions, comprehending the whole work. The stories amount in all to seventy-four, and are introduced by the fiction of a princess and her father being reduced to a private station, and attaching to themselves a select party of friends, who, for the sake of recreation, and to enjoy the cool air, as it was summer, entertain each other during night with relating stories.

Straparola has borrowed copiously from preceding authors. Thus the 3d of 1st night resembles the story *Des Trois Larrons*, in the *Fabliaux* (see p. 200).

4th of 1st. Is from the 1st of 10th of the *Pecorone*, which has already been mentioned as the origin of Chaucer's *Man of Lawes Tale* (see p. 252).

2d of 2d. Is from 2d of 2d of the *Pecorone*, or *Les Deux Changeurs*, in the *Fabliaux* (see p. 249).

3d of 2d. Is nothing more than an old mythological tale, though the metamorphosis it describes is a little less elegant than that of *Daphne* or *Lodona*.

4th of 2d. Machiavel and Brevio's story of *Belfagor* (see p. 259).

1st of 4th. That part where the Satyr laughs at an old man in tears attending the funeral of a child, whom he imagined to be his own, but who was, in fact, the son of the chaplain officiating at the ceremony, is from the romance of *Merlin*.

2d of 4th. From the *Ordeal of the Serpent*, in the romance of *Vergilius* (see p. 183).

4th of 4th. Is from 2d of 1st of the *Pecorone*, already pointed out as the origin of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, &c. (see p. 248).

3d of 5th. The *Fabliaux* of *Les Trois Bossus*.

1st of 6th. The first part is Poggio's *Nasi Supplementum*. The second part, which relates to the reprisal of the husband, is from *La Peche de l' Anneau*, the 3d story of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, which had been written in France before this time.

3d of 7th. From the 195th of *Sacchetti* (see p. 245).

2d of 8th. From *Fabliau La Dame qui fut Escolée*.



4th of 8th. Is the 95th of the *Cento Novelle Antiche*, where a wine merchant, who sold his wine half mixed with water, miraculously loses the half of his gains.

6th of 8th. Is merely an expansion of the *Clitella*, one of Poggio's *Facetiae*.

2d of 9th. Where the Prince of Hungary, being in love with a woman of inferior condition, is sent by his father to travel, and finding on his return that she is married, expires by her side, and his mistress also dies of grief, is precisely the 8th of 4th day of the *Decameron*.

3d of 9th. An adventure of Tristan's in Ireland applied to an Italian prince.

3d of 10th. Is the common story of a lady freed by her favourite knight, when on the point of being devoured by a monster.

5th of 12th. From 1st of 10th of the *Decameron* (see p. 239).

1st of 13th. Is the *Insanus Sapiens*, the 2d story in Poggio's *Facetiae*.

2d of 13th. Is from the 1st of Sozzini, an obscure Italian novelist of the 15th century. A certain person having purchased some capons from a peasant, tells him that he will receive payment from a friar, to whom he conducts him. When they are admitted to the holy man, the purchaser whispers in his ear, that the countryman had come to confess his sins; and then says aloud, that the priest will attend to him instantly. The peasant supposing that his debtor spoke of the money he owed for the capons, allows him to depart without paying their price; but on holding out his hand to receive it, he is desired to kneel down by the confessor, who immediately crosses himself and commences a *Paternoster*.

Straparola, however, has levied his heaviest contributions on the eighty novels of Jerome Morlini, a work written in Latin, and printed at Naples in 1520, 4to, but now almost utterly unknown, as there was but one edition, and even of this impression most of the copies were deservedly committed to the flames soon after the publication: there has been lately, however, a reprint at Paris from one of the copies still extant. Many of the tales of Straparola are closely imitated, and the last thirteen are literally translated from the Latin of Morlini. One of these is the com-

mon story of a physician, who said that the whole practice of physic consisted in three rules,—to keep the feet warm, the head cool, and to feed like the beasts, that is, according to nature.

But although Straparola has copied largely from others, no one has suggested more to his successors. His work seems to have been a perfect storehouse for future Italian novelists, and the French authors of fairy and oriental tales. The 1st tale, which was itself partly suggested by the 52d of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, and was separately published in the 16th century, is the origin of the second of the *Tartar Tales*, *Sinadab fils de Medecin Sacan*. Fontaine's *Faiseur d'oreilles et racommodeur de moules*, is from the first half of the 1st of 6th. The last part of the 1st of 8th is the often-repeated story *Get up and bar the Door*. In the conclusion of this tale of Straparola, there is a dispute between a husband and his wife who should shut the door. A stranger comes in, and uses unsuitable familiarities with the wife, who reproaches her husband with his patience, and is in consequence obliged to shut the door, according to agreement. The 2d of 8th may have suggested the *Ecole des Maris* of Moliere, where two guardians, who are brothers, bring up their wards on different systems of education, the one on a rigid, and the other on a more lax system. The 5th of 8th is the origin of Armin's *Italian Tailor and his Boy*, printed in 1609.

It is chiefly, however, as being the source of those fairy tales which were so prevalent in France in the commencement of the 18th century, that the *Nights of Straparola* are curious in tracing the progress of fiction. The northern elves had by this time got possession of Scotland, and perhaps of England, but the stories concerning their more brilliant sisterhood of the East, were concentrated, in the middle of the 16th century, in the tales of Straparola. Thus, for example, the third of the fourth is a complete fairy tale. A courtier of the King of Provino overheard the conversation of three sisters, one of whom said that if married to the king's butler she would satisfy the royal household with a cup of wine; the second, that if united to the chamberlain she would weave webs of exquisite



fineness ; the third, that if the king espoused her she would bring him three children, with golden hair, and a star on their forehead. This conversation being reported at court, the king is so much delighted with the fancy of having children of this description that he marries the youngest sister. The jealousy of the queen-mother and the remaining sisters being excited by her good fortune, when the queen in due time gives birth to two sons and a daughter, they substitute three puppies in their place, and throw the children into the stream ; they are preserved, however, by a peasant, who is soon enriched by their golden locks, and the pearls they shed instead of tears. Having grown up they come to the capital, and the sisters, discovering who they are, resolve on their destruction. These women ingratiate themselves with the princess, and persuade her to send her brothers on a dangerous expedition, of which the object is to find the beautifying water, which, after many perils, they acquire by directions of a pigeon ; and the singing apple, which they obtain by being clothed in enchanted vestments, which fright away the monster by whom the tree was guarded. But in their attempts to gain the singing bird they are retarded by being themselves converted into statues. The princess, however, arrives at the spot, and takes the bird captive, by whose means they are disenchanted, and finally informed concerning their parentage. In whatever way it may have come to Straparola, this is precisely the story of the Princess Parizade, which forms the last of the Arabian Nights Entertainments, where a queen is promoted in the same manner as in Straparola, and persecuted in the same manner by the jealousy of sisters, whose last effort is persuading the young Princess Parizade to insist on her brothers procuring for her use the talking bird, the singing tree, and golden water. Madame d' Aulnoy's fairy tale of Belle Etoile has been copied either from the Arabian or Italian story. Indeed all the best fairy tales of that lady, as well as most others which compose the Cabinet des Feés, are mere translations from the Nights of Straparola. The 1st of 2d is Mad. D' Aulnoy's Prince Marcassin, and 1st of 3d is her Dauphin. In the 3d of the 3d a beautiful princess, called Biancabella, is married to the king of Naples ;

but while he is absent prosecuting a war, his stepmother sends her to a desert, while her own daughter personates Biancabella on the king's return. The queen is succoured by a fairy, to whom she had shown kindness while in the shape of a fawn : by her means she is at length restored to her husband, and the guilty punished. This is the well-known story of Blanchebelle, in the *Illustres Feés*. That of Fortunio, in the same collection, is from the 4th of the 3d, where the departure of Fortunio from the house of his parents—the judgment he pronounces—the power of metamorphosis which he in consequence receives—his transformation into a bird—his mode of acquiring the princess in marriage—the whole of his adventure in the palace of the Syrens, and final escape from that enchanted residence, are precisely the same as in the well-known tale of Fortunio. The 1st of the 5th is the fairy tale of Prince Guerini, and the 1st of the 11th is the *Maitre Chat*, or *Chat Botté*, of Perrault, well known to every child in this country by the name of Puss in Boots. Straparola's cat, however, is not booted, and the concluding adventure of the castle is a little different : in the Italian tale, the real proprietor, who was absent, dies on his way home, so that Constantine is not disturbed in his possession ; but in the *Maitre Chat*, the Cat persuades the Ogre, to whom it belonged, to change himself into a mouse, and thus acquires the privilege of devouring him. The 1st of 4th, 2d of 5th, 1st of 7th, and 5th of 8th, are all in the same style ; and some of them may perhaps be more particularly mentioned when we come to treat of the fairy tales which were so prevalent in France early in the 18th century.

But while the Nights of Straparola are thus curious in illustrating the transmission and progress of fiction, few of them deserve to be analyzed on account of their intrinsic merit. The second of the seventh night, however, is a romantic story, and places in a striking light the violence of the amorous and revengeful passions of Italians. Between the mainland of Ragusa and an island at some distance, stood a rock entirely surrounded by the sea. On this barren cliff there was no building, except a church, and a small cottage inhabited by a young hermit, who came to seek alms



some times at Ragusa, but more frequently at the island. There he is seen and admired by a young woman, confessedly the most beautiful of the inhabitants. As she is neither dilatory nor ceremonious in communicating her sentiments, and as the hermit had received from her beauty corresponding impressions, nothing but a favourable opportunity is wanting to consummate their happiness. With consistent frankness of conduct, she requests her lover to place a lamp in the window of his cottage at a certain hour of the night, and promises that, if thus guided, she will swim to the hermitage. Soon as she spied the signal, she departed on this marine excursion, and arrived at the love-lighted mansion of the recluse. From his cell, to which she was conducted, she returned, undiscovered, at the approach of dawn; and, emboldened by impunity, repeatedly availed herself of the beacon. At length she was remarked by some boatmen, who had nearly fished her up, and who informed her brothers of her amphibious disposition, the spot to which she resorted, and their suspicion of the mode by which she was directed. Her kinsmen forthwith resolve on her death. The youngest brother proceeds in twilight to the rock, and, in order that the signal might not be displayed, implores for that night the hospitality of the hermit. On the same evening the elder brothers privately leave their house in a boat, with a concealed light and a pole. Having rowed to that part of the deep which washed the hermitage, they placed the light on the pole. Their sister, who appears to have been ever watchful, departed from the island. When the brothers heard her approach, they slipped away through the water, and as the pole was fastened to the boat, they drew the light along with them. The poor wretch, who in the dark saw no other object, followed the delusion to the main sea, in which it was at length extinguished. Three days afterwards her body was washed ashore on the rock, where it was interred by her lover. Thus, adds the approving novelist, the reputations of the brothers and the sister were equally and at once preserved.

The first part of this tale was probably suggested by the classical fable of Hero and Leander. It is the subject of a poem by Bernard le Gentil, entitled *Euphrosiné et Melidor*.

## BANDELLO,

who, in this country at least, is the best known of all the Italian novelists except Boccaccio, was born in the neighbourhood of Tortona. He resided for some time at Milan, where he composed a number of his novels, but, wearied with the tumults and revolutions of that state, he retired in 1534, to a village in the vicinity of Agen in France. Here he revised and added to his novels, which some friends had recovered from the hands of the soldiers who burned his house at Milan. In 1550 he was raised by Francis I. to the bishopric of Agen, where he died in 1562. His tales were first published at Lucca, 1554, 4to. In the complete editions of Bandello, the work is divided into four parts, the first, second, and third parts containing fifty-nine stories, and the fourth twenty-eight. The whole are dedicated to Ippolita Sforza, though she died before their publication, because it was at her desire that the work was originally undertaken. Besides this general dedication, each novel is addressed to some *Valoroso Signore* or *Chiarissima Signora*, and in this introduction the novelist generally explains how he came to a knowledge of the event he is about to relate. He usually declares that he heard it told in company, mentions the name of the teller, details the conversation by which it was introduced, and pretends to report it, as far as his memory serves, in the exact words of his authority.

The novels of Bandello have been blamed for negligence and impurity of style. Of this the author appears to have been sensible, and repeatedly apologizes for his defects in elegance of diction. "Io non son Toscano, nè bene intendo la proprieta di quella lingua; anzi mi confesso Lombardo." This is the reason, perhaps, why the tales of Bandello have been less popular in Italy than in foreign countries, where, as we shall now find, they have been much read and imitated.

Part I. 9. From the *Fabliau du Chevalier qui confessa sa femme*. For the various transmigrations of this story (see p. 230).

21. A Bohemian nobleman has a magic picture, which, by its colour, shows the fidelity or aberrations of his spouse. This is the origin of Massinger's fanciful play of the



Picture, where Mathias, a knight of Bohemia, receives a similar present from the scholar Baptista. The manner in which two Hungarian gentlemen attempt to seduce the lady in her husband's absence, and the contrivance by which she repulses both, are the same in the novel and the drama. Massinger, however, has added the temptation held forth to the husband by the queen.

The incident which relates to the Picture is probably of oriental origin. In the history of Zeyn Alasnam, in the Arabian Nights, the king of the genii gives that prince a mirror, which reflected the representation of the woman whose chastity he might wish to ascertain. If the glass remained pure she was immaculate: but if, on the contrary, it became sullied, she had not been always unspotted, or had ceased to desire being so. From the east this magical contrivance was introduced into many early romances of the 14th and 15th centuries, and thence, by a natural transition, found its way into the novels of Bandello.

22. Is the origin of Shakspeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*, and is the longest tale in the work of Bandello. The deception, which forms the leading incident, is as old as the romance of *Tirante the White*, but was probably suggested to the Italian novelist by a story in the *Orlando Furioso*. In the fifth canto of that poem, the Duke of Albany is enamoured of Gineura, daughter of the King of Scotland. This princess, however, being prepossessed in favour of an Italian lover, the duke has recourse to stratagem to free himself from this dangerous rival. He persuades the waiting-maid of Gineura to disguise herself for one night in the attire of her mistress, and in this garb to throw down a ladder from the window, by which he might ascend into the chamber of Gineura. The duke had previously so arranged matters that the Italian beheld in concealment this scene, so painful to a lover. Gineura is condemned to death for the imaginary transgression, and is only saved by the opportune arrival of the paladin Rinaldo, who declares himself the champion of the accused princess.

In the tale of Bandello, which is evidently borrowed from the *Orlando*, Lionato, a gentleman of Messina had a daughter named

Fenicia, who was betrothed to Timbreo de Cardona, a young man of the same city. Girondo, a disappointed lover of the young lady, having resolved to prevent the marriage, sends a confidant to Timbreo to warn him of the disloyalty of his mistress, and offers that night to show him a stranger scaling her chamber window. Timbreo accepts the invitation, and in consequence sees the hired servant of Girondo, in the dress of a gentleman, ascend a ladder, and enter the house of Lionato. Stung with rage and jealousy, he next morning accuses his innocent mistress to her father, and rejects the alliance. Fenicia, on hearing this intelligence, sinks down in a swoon. This is followed by a dangerous illness, which gives her father an opportunity of preventing reports injurious to her fame by pretending she is dead. She is accordingly sent to the country, and her funeral rites are celebrated in Messina. Girondo, struck with remorse at having occasioned her death, now confesses his villainy to Timbreo, after which they proceed together to make the requisite apologies to her family. The sole penance which the father imposes on Timbreo is, that he should espouse a lady of his selection, and that he should not demand to see her previous to the performance of the bridal ceremony. At the nuptial festival, Timbreo, instead of the new bride he awaited, is presented with the innocent and much-injured Fenicia. That part of *Much Ado about Nothing*, which relates to Hero, though it came to Shakspeare through the medium of the histories of Belleforest, bears a striking resemblance to this novel. In the comedy, as in the tale, the scene is laid at Messina, and the father's name is Leonato. Claudio is about to be married to Hero, but Don John attempts to prevent the match. He consults with a villainous confederate, who undertakes to scale Hero's windows in the sight of Claudio. The lover having been witness to this scene, promulgates the infamy of Hero. She faints on hearing of the accusation: she is believed dead, and her funeral rites are celebrated. The treachery being accidentally detected, Leonato insists that Claudio should marry his niece, instead of his deceased daughter, but at the marriage the destined bride proves to be Hero. Notwithstanding this general



resemblance, the English poet has deviated from his original in three striking alterations. In the first place, Don John is merely anxious to prevent the match from spleen and hatred towards Claudio, while in the tale the villain is entirely actuated by a passion for the bride. Secondly, the device by which the jealousy of the lover is awakened, is carried farther in *Much Ado about Nothing* than in *Bandello*; in the former the friend of Don John persuades the waiting-maid of Hero to personate her mistress at the window, a stratagem resorted to in the story of *Geneura* in the *Orlando*, which shows that Shakspeare had not exclusively borrowed from *Bandello*. Lastly, in the comedy the deceit is not discovered by the voluntary confession of the traitor, but is detected by a watchman on the street overhearing the associate of the principal villain relating to his friend the success of the stratagem, by way of conversation. In the two first deviations the dramatist, I think, has improved on his original, but in the third has altered to the worse. A similar story with that in the *Decameron* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, occurs in Spenser's *Faery Queene* (B. 2. c. 4). There Guyon, in the course of his adventures, meets with a squire, who relates to him that a false friend being enamoured of the same mistress with himself, had instilled suspicions into his mind, which he had afterwards confirmed by treacherously exhibiting himself disguised as a groom at an amorous interview with a waiting-maid, whom he had persuaded to assume the dress of her mistress *Claribella*. See also the 9th novel of the introduction to the tales of *Cinthio*.

23. A girl kisses her nurse's eye to allow her lover to escape unseen: this is from the 8th tale of *Petrus Alphonsus*.

25. Story of the architect and his son, who rob the king's treasury. (See p. 250.)

29. Common story of a simple fellow who thinks a sermon is entirely addressed to himself.

42. A gentleman of *Valentia* privately espouses a woman of low birth; he long delays to make the marriage public, and she at length ascertains that he is about to be united to a lady of high rank. Soon after the celebration of the nuptials, she pretends to have forgiven this breach of faith, and persuades

him to come one night to her house, where, when he has fallen asleep, she binds him with ropes, by aid and counsel of a female slave, and after subjecting him to the most frightful mutilation, plunges a dagger in his heart. This is the origin of *Beaumont and Fletcher's* *Triumph of Death*, the third of their *Four Plays in One*, where *Lavall*, the lustful heir of the Duke of *Anjou*, having abandoned his wife *Gabriella*, for a new bride, is enticed to her house by contrivance of her servant *Mary*, and is there murdered while under the influence of a sleeping potion.

57. A king of *Morocco*, while engaged in the chase, is separated from his attendants, and loses his way. He is received and hospitably entertained by a fisherman, who, ignorant of the quality of his visitor, treats him with considerable freedom, but is loud in his praises of the king. Next morning the rank of his guest is revealed to the fisherman by the arrival of those courtiers who had accompanied their monarch in the chase. A similar occurrence is related in the *Fabliaux*, as well as many of the old English ballads, and probably had its origin in some adventure of the Caliph *Haroun Alraschid*. The tale of *Bandello* is the origin of *Le Roi et le Fermier* of *M. Sedaine*.

Part II. 9. Story of *Romeo and Juliet*. (See p. 255.)

15. *Pietro*, a favourite of *Alessandro de Medicis*, carried off the daughter of a miller, who soon after proceeded to *Florence*, and complained of this violence to the duke. *Alessandro* went, as on a visit to the house of his favourite, and asked to survey the different apartments. The latter excused himself from showing one of the smaller rooms. The door, however, being at length burst open, and the girl discovered, the duke compelled him to marry her, on pain of losing his head. That part of *Beaumont and Fletcher's* comedy, *The Maid in the Mill*, which relates to *Otranto* and *Florimel*, the supposed daughter of the miller *Franio*, is founded on the above novel.

35. Is the same story with the plot of the *Mysterious Mother* of *Horace Walpole*, and the thirtieth tale of the *Queen of Navarre*. The first part of this story had been already told in the 23d novel of *Massuccio*. The second part, which relates to the marriage,



only occurs in *Bandello* and the *Queen of Navarre*. It is not likely, however, that the French or Italian novelists borrowed from one another. The tales of *Bandello* were first published in 1554, and as the *Queen of Navarre* died in 1549, it is improbable that she had an opportunity of seeing them. On the other hand, the work of the queen was not printed till 1558, nine years after her death, so it is not likely that any part of it was copied by *Bandello*, whose tales had been edited some years before. It may, therefore, be presumed that some current tradition furnished both with the horrible incident they report. Indeed *Bandello* declares in the introduction to the tale, that it happened in *Navarre*, and was told to him by a lady of that country. In *Luther's Colloquia Mensalia*, under the article *Auricular Confession*, it is said to have occurred at *Erfurt*, in *Germany*. It is also related in the eleventh chapter of *Byshop's Blossoms*, and in *L'Inceste Innocent*, a novel by *Des Fontaines*, published 1638. *Julio de Medrano*, an old Spanish writer of the 16th century, says that he heard a similar story when he was in the *Bourbonnois*, where the inhabitants showed him the house in which the parties had lived, and repeated to him this epitaph, which was inscribed on their tomb:—

Cy-gist la fille, cy-gist le pere,  
Cy-gist la soeur, cy-gist le frere ;  
Cy-gist la femme, et le mary,  
Et si n'y a que deux corps icy.

*Mr Walpole* disclaims having had any knowledge of the tale of the *Queen of Navarre* or *Bandello* at the time he wrote his drama. Its plot, he says, was suggested by a story he had heard when very young, of a lady who, under uncommon agonies of mind, waited on *Archbishop Tillotson*, revealed her crime, and besought his counsel in what manner she should act, as the fruit of her horrible artifice had lately been married to her son, neither party being aware of the relation that subsisted betwixt them. The prelate charged her never to let her son or daughter know what had passed. For herself he bade her almost despair. The dramatist has rather added to the horror and improbability of this tale, than mellowed it by softer shades ; but his poem

deserves much praise for strong expression, and powerful delineation of monastic cruelty and fraud.

36. Has usually been accounted the origin of *Shakspeare's Twelfth Night*. The rudiments, however, of the story of *Bandello* may be found in *Cinthio*. In the *Ecatommithi* of that author, a gentleman falling under the displeasure of the King of *Naples*, leaves that country with his two children, a boy and girl, who had a striking resemblance to each other. The vessel in which they had departed is shipwrecked, and the father is supposed to be lost, but the two children get safe to shore, and are brought up unknown to each other by two different persons who resided near the coast. The girl, when she grows up, falls in love with a young man, and, by the intervention of an old woman, goes to serve him in the garb of a page, and is mistaken by her master for her brother, who had formerly been in his service, but had eloped in female disguise, to prosecute an intrigue in the neighbourhood. In *Bandello* the circumstances are more developed than in *Cinthio*, and bear a closer resemblance to the drama. An Italian merchant had two children, a boy and girl, so like in personal appearance, that when dressed in a similar manner, they could hardly be distinguished by their parents. The boy was lost in the sack of *Rome* by the Imperialists, being carried off by a German soldier. After this event, the father went with his daughter to reside at *Aix*, in *Savoy*. When the girl grows up, she has a lover of whom she is deeply enamoured, but who afterwards forsakes her. At this time her father being absent on business, and her faithless lover having lately lost a favourite attendant, by the intervention of her nurse she is received into his service in disguise of a page. She soon obtains the confidence of her master, and is employed by him to propitiate the rival who had supplanted her in his affections. This lady falls in love with the disguised emissary. Meanwhile the brother having obtained his liberty by the death of his German master, comes in search of his father to *Aix*, where he is seen and courted by the female admirer of his sister, who, deceived by the resemblance, mistakes him for the object of her attachment. At length, by the arrival of



the father, the whole mystery is cleared up. The lover returns to the mistress he had forsaken, and who had suffered so much for his sake, while the brother more than supplies his sister's place with her fair admirer. The disguise of the young lady, which is the basis of this tale, and the plot of *Twelfth Night*, is not improbable in the former, as it was assumed with the view of recalling the affections of a lover; but Viola, separated from her brother in a storm, and driven on an unknown coast, forms the wild project of engaging the affections of the duke, to whose person she was a stranger, and whose heart she understood was devoted to another. Influenced by no passion nor motive, she throws off the decorum of her sex, and serves the destined husband of Olivia in an useless and unworthy disguise. The love, too, of the duke's mistress for the disguised Viola, is more improbable from the circumstances of her situation and temper, than the passion of the Catella of the novelist. In *Bandello*, the brother has an object in coming to Aix, where his father and sister resided, but it is difficult to assign a motive for Sebastian's journey to Illyria. It is also more likely, as in the novel, that a lover should return to a mistress he had forsaken, on receiving a striking instance of fidelity and tenderness, than that the duke should abandon a woman he passionately adored, and espouse a stranger, of whose sex he had hitherto been ignorant, and who had not even love to plead as an excuse for her transgression of the bounds of decorum.<sup>1</sup> A lady disguised in boy's clothes, and serving her lover as a page, or otherwise, for the interests of her love, is one of the most common incidents in the Italian novels and our early British dramas. Besides *Twelfth Night*, and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, it is the foundation of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, Shirley's *Grateful Servant*, *School of Compliment*, *Maid's Revenge*, &c.

Part III. 41. Story common in our English jest-books, of a Spaniard who asks part of a dinner for himself, giving his name at full length, and is told there are not provisions for so many people. In the English story I think he asks lodging.

<sup>1</sup> Shakspeare Illustrated, vol. ii.

46. Is the most obscene story in *Bandello*, or perhaps in the whole series of Italian novels, yet it is said in the introduction, to have been related by Navagero to the Princess of Mantua and Duchess of Urbino.

47. Is from 4th of 8th of Boccaccio.

59. An Italian count, who had long doubted of his wife's fidelity, at length becomes assured of her constancy from her assiduous attendance during a long sickness, which had in fact been created by a poison she had administered. Being at length informed, however, by a domestic, that his wife embraced the opportunity of his confinement from illness to receive the visits of a lover, he is enabled to detect them together, and sacrifices both to his resentment. This tale is the first part of *La Force d' Amitié*, a story introduced by Le Sage in his *Diable Boiteux*.

Part IV. 17. Marquis of Ferrara prepares a mock execution, and the victim of this villainous jest expires from apprehension. A similar effect of terror forms the subject of Miss Baillie's play of the *Dream*, which is the second of her tragedies on Fear.

The ancestors of

#### NICOLAO GRANUCCI,<sup>2</sup>

being of the Guelph faction, were expelled from Lucca in the beginning of the 14th century, but afterwards returned and spread out into numerous branches, through the various states of Italy. It is from the circumstances of his family that this novelist deduces the origin of his stories, as he informs the reader, that being at Sienna in 1568, he went to the neighbouring town of Pienza, to inquire if there were any descendants of the Granucci settled there. He was conducted by two of the inhabitants to an abbey in the vicinity, and, after his arrival, was carried to see the Villa de Trojano, by one of the monks, who, on the way, related a number of tales, of which at parting he presented a compendium in writing; and from this MS. Granucci asserts, that he afterwards formed his work, which was published at Venice, 1574. The 5th story of Granucci is from the 1st of Petrus Alphonsus. A son boasts of the number

<sup>2</sup> La piacevole notte e lieto giorno, opera morale di Nicolao Granucci di Lucca.



of his friends to his father, who advises him to try them, by putting a dead calf in a sack, and pretending that it is the corpse of a person he had murdered. When he asks his friends to assist him in concealing it, they unanimously decline doing any thing in the matter, but the service is undertaken by the sole friend of whom the father boasted. This story is older even than Alphonsus; I think it is of classical origin, and has been somewhere told of Dionysius of Syracuse and his son. Another story of Granucci is from the fabliau *Du curé qui posa une pierre*.

#### ASCANIO MORI DA CENO<sup>1</sup>

was a Mantuan, and passed his life in the service of the princes of Gonzaga, one of whom he followed to Hungary, when he went to attend the Emperor Maximilian in the wars against Solyman. He was an intimate friend of Torquato Tasso, and a curious extract from a letter addressed to him by that poet is given in Black's *Life of Tasso* (vol. ii. p. 194). Ceno's novels, which are fifteen in number, are dedicated to Vincenzo Gonzaga, Prince of Mantua, noted as the assassin of Crichton and the patron of Tasso. The first part of his work was printed at Mantua, 1585, 4to. From the title it would appear that a second part was intended to have been added, but it was never written, or at least never published. The 3d novel is the common story of a messenger coming express with a pardon to a criminal, but who, having his attention diverted by the execution, which was commencing, does not deliver his orders till all is concluded. The 13th is the still better known story of two young men, who, during their father's absence, pretend that he is dead; they sit in deep mourning and apparent distress, and in consequence receive his country rents from the steward, who arrives with them.

#### CELIO MALESPINI,<sup>2</sup>

during his youth, was in some public employment at Milan, but afterwards resided at

<sup>1</sup> Prima parte dell' novelle di Ascanio Mori da Ceno.

<sup>2</sup> Ducento novelle del Signore Celio Malespini, nel quale si raccontano diversi avvenimenti; così lieti, come mesti e stravaganti.

Venice, and finally passed into the service of Duke Francis of Medici. Malespini was the first person who published the *Jerusalem Delivered* of Tasso, which he did in a very imperfect and mutilated manner, and without the consent of the poet. His novels, which amount to two hundred divided into two parts, were written about 1580, and published at Venice in 1609, 4to. He introduces them by telling that a party of ladies and gentlemen, who had fled from Venice during the plague in 1576, met in a palace in the *Contado di Trevizi*, where they chiefly amused themselves with relating stories. In N. 41, of the first part, there is a curious account of the amusements of the *Campagna della Calza*, so called from a particular stocking which the members wore. This society, which existed in Italy during the 15th and 16th centuries, was neither, as some have imagined, a chivalrous nor academic institution, but merely an association for the purposes of public and private entertainments, as games, feasts, and theatrical representations. In course of time this university became divided into different fraternities, as the *Campagna dei Florida*, *Sempiterni*, &c., each of which was governed by particular laws and officers, and the members were distinguished by a certain habit.

Few of the tales of Malespini are original: long before the period of their publication, the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* had been written in France, and almost the whole of these have been inserted by Malespini in his novels; indeed he has translated them all except the 5th, 35th, 36th, 64th, 74th, and 93d. The correspondence of the tales in these two works will be best shown from the following table:—

| Malespini. | C. N. N. | Malespini. | C. N. N. |
|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| 2 - - -    | is 62    | 26 - - -   | 42       |
| 5 - - -    | 13       | 27 - - -   | 44       |
| 6 - - -    | 97       | 32 - - -   | 81       |
| 8 - - -    | 68       | 33 - - -   | 54       |
| 9 - - -    | 69       | 35 - - -   | 59       |
| 10 - - -   | 53       | 36 - - -   | 24       |
| 14 - - -   | 52       | 37 - - -   | 28       |
| 15 - - -   | 4        | 38 - - -   | 19       |
| 17 - - -   | 33       | 39 - - -   | 77       |
| 18 - - -   | 8        | 40 - - -   | 20       |
| 19 - - -   | 73       | 42 - - -   | 58       |
| 20 - - -   | 27       | 43 - - -   | 65       |
| 23 - - -   | 32       | 44 - - -   | 16       |



| Malespini. | C. N. N. | Malespini. | C. N. N. |
|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| 45         | -        | 12         | -        |
| 46         | -        | 13         | -        |
| 47         | -        | 16         | -        |
| 49         | -        | 18         | -        |
| 57         | -        | 19         | -        |
| 58         | -        | 25         | -        |
| 61         | -        | 27         | -        |
| 65         | -        | 29         | -        |
| 67         | -        | 35         | -        |
| 75         | -        | 40         | -        |
| 78         | -        | 43         | -        |
| 79         | -        | 47         | -        |
| 80         | -        | 49         | -        |
| 81         | -        | 51         | -        |
| 86         | -        | 52         | -        |
| 88         | -        | 53         | -        |
| 90         | -        | 56         | -        |
| 91         | -        | 57         | -        |
| 92         | -        | 59         | -        |
| 93         | -        | 61         | -        |
| 94         | -        | 62         | -        |
| 95         | -        | 63         | -        |
| 97         | -        | 66         | -        |
| 99         | -        | 67         | -        |
| 100        | -        | 68         | -        |
| 101        | -        | 70         | -        |
|            |          | 73         | -        |
|            |          | 74         | -        |
|            |          | 75         | -        |
|            |          | 77         | -        |
|            |          | 79         | -        |
|            |          | 81         | -        |
|            |          | 88         | -        |
|            |          | 89         | -        |
|            |          | 96         | -        |

PART II.

|    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 1  | - | 56 |
| 3  | - | 90 |
| 5  | - | 55 |
| 7  | - | 84 |
| 8  | - | 22 |
| 10 | - | 31 |

Malespini, however, has levied contributions on other works than the Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles. By this time the Diana Enamorada of Montemayor had appeared in Spain, and three of the longest tales are taken from that pastoral. In the first part, the twenty-fifth tale is borrowed from the intricate loves of Ismenia Selvagio and Alanio, related in the Diana. The 36th of the second part is the Moorish episode of Xarifa, and the 94th is the story of the shepherdess Belisa. A few are also borrowed from the preceding Italian novelists. The 71st is from the 22d of the last part of Bandello, and others may be found in the Ecatommithi of Cinthio.

ANNIBAL CAMPEGGI  
lived in the beginning of the 17th century.

His first tale is as old as the Heetopades, and is the story of the jealous husband who tied his wife to a post. The second is that of the Widow of Ephesus, related by Petronius Arbiter, and in the Seven Wise Masters (see p. 47). It has been imitated in Italian by Eustachio Manfredi, in French by St Evremont and Fontaine, and forms the subject of an English drama of the commencement of the 17th century, entitled Women's Tears (Dodsley's Collection, vol. 6). The story has been also inserted by John of Salisbury in his book, De Nugis Curialibus (b. 8, c. 11); he reports it as a historical incident, and cites Flavian as his authority for this assertion.

Subsequent to this period, there appeared but few Italian novels, and scarcely any of merit. From this censure I have only to except one striking tale, by Vincenzo Rota, a Paduan gentleman, of the last century. It is the story of a young man who fled from his parents, who kept a small inn in a remote part of the Brescian territory. Having in course of time acquired a fortune by industry, he returned after an absence of twenty-five years, but concealed who he was on the first night of his arrival, and not being recognised, is murdered while asleep by his parents, for the sake of the treasure which his father found he had along with him. From the priest of the village, to whom alone their son had discovered himself, they learn with despair, on the following morning, the full extent of their guilt and misery. This tale was first printed by the Count Borromeo, a fellow-citizen of the author, in his Notizia de Novellieri Italiani da lui posseduti con alcune Novelle inedite Bassano, 1794. A similar story is related of a Norman innkeeper, in an obscure periodical publication, called the Visitor; and also forms the basis of the plot of the Fatal Curiosity, a tragedy by Lillo, in three acts, which Mr Harris, in his Philological Enquiries, says, "is the model of a perfect fable." The subject of this piece was taken from an old pamphlet, entitled "News from Perin, in Cornwall, of a most bloody and unexampled Murther, very lately committed by a Father on his owne Sonne." Lillo's Fatal Curiosity has been imitated in a more recent tragedy, entitled The Shipwreck. The Twenty-fourth of February, by the



German dramatist Werner, is founded on a similar incident. A family of peasants residing in the solitudes of Switzerland, was pursued from father to son by a paternal malediction, on account of a dreadful atrocity committed by one of its forefathers, and was condemned to solemnize the 24th of February by the commission of some horrible crime. The third heir of this accursed generation had been the cause of his father's death on the fatal day. The son of this parricide returning with a treasure to the cottage after a long absence, is not recognised by his parent, and the father, by the murder of his son, for sake of his wealth, at midnight on the 24th of February, again solemnizes this strange anniversary.

No foreign productions have had such influence on English literature, as the early Italian novels with which we have been so long engaged. The best of these stories appeared in an English dress before the close of the reign of Elizabeth, either by direct translation, or through the medium of French and Latin versions. Many of these were printed even before the translation of Belleforest's Grand Repertory of Tragical Narrations, which was published towards the end of the 16th century. The paraphrases, abridgements, and translations of Italian novels, contained in Paynter's Palace of Pleasure; Whetstone's Heptameron; Westward for Smelts; Grimstone's Admirable Histories, and other productions of the same nature, afforded a new species of literary gratification, as their merit consisted not merely in romantic invention, but the delineation of character, and an artful arrangement of events. They became the fashionable entertainment of all who yet preserved their relish for fiction, and who professed to read for amusement.

This is apparent even from a passage in the Schoolmaster of Ascham, Queen Elizabeth's celebrated preceptor, who complains "that ten La Morte d'Arthures did not the tenth part so much harm as one of these books made in Italy, and translated in England. And that which is most to be lamented, and therefore more needful to be looked to, there be more of these ungracious books set out in print within these few months, than have been seen in England many score years before." Thus the popularity of these produc-

tions shook the fabric of Gothic romance, and directed the thoughts of our writers to new inventions. The legends of the minstrels contained much bold adventure, heroic enterprise, and strong touches of rude, though picturesque delineation; but they were defective in the disposition of circumstances, and those descriptions of characters and events, which, from their nearer analogy to truth, were demanded by a more discerning age. Accordingly, till the Italian novels became current, affecting and natural situations, the combination of incident, and pathos of catastrophe, were utterly unknown; and distress, especially that which arises from the conflicts of the tenderest of the passions, had not yet been exhibited in its most interesting forms. It was from the Italian novelists accordingly that our poets, particularly the dramatic, acquired ideas of a legitimate plot, and the multiplication of events necessary to constitute a tragic or a comic intrigue. We have already seen that the most popular comedies of Shakspeare have been derived, with little improvement in the incidents, from the stories of Boccaccio, Ser Giovanni, Cinthio, and Bandello. The spirit that pervades the works of his contemporary dramatists, has been drawn from similar sources. The gayer inventions of the novelists may often be traced in the sprightly or humorous scenes of Beaumont and Fletcher; and the savage atrocity by which the Italian tales are sometimes distinguished, has unquestionably produced those accumulated horrors which characterise so many dramas of Shirley and of Ford.

But, although the Italian novels had such influence on the general literature of this country, I am not aware that they gave birth to any original work in a similar style of composition. In France, on the other hand, their effect may have been less universal; but, at an early period, they produced works of a similar description, of considerable merit and celebrity.

Of these the earliest is the CENT NOUVELLES NOUVELLES, tales which are full of imagination and gaiety, and written in a style the most *naïve* and agreeable: Indeed, a good deal of the pleasure derived from their perusal, must be attributed to the wonderful charm of the old French language. They have formed the



model of all succeeding tales in that tongue—of those of the Queen of Navarre, and the authors by whom she has been imitated or followed.

These stories were first printed in folio, by Verard, without date, from a MS. of the year 1456. They are said, in the introduction, to have been related by an assemblage of young noblemen, at the court of Burgundy, to which the dauphin, afterwards Lewis XI., retired, during the quarrel with his father. The relaters of these tales are M. Crequi, chamberlain of the duke, the Count de Chatelux, mareschal of France, the Count de Brienne, and a number of others. A few stories are also told by the duke himself, and by the dauphin, who, it is said, took care *de les faire recueillir, et de les publier*. The account of their having been verbally related by these persons of quality, is a fiction; but the fact, I believe, is, that they were written for the entertainment of the dauphin, at the time he retired to the court of Burgundy. Most of them are of a comic nature, and, I think, there are only five tragical tales in the whole collection.

1. Entitled *La Medaille à revers*, is from the Fabliaux *Les Deux Changeurs* (Le Grand, 4. 173), but had already been imitated by Ser Giovanni, in the 2d of the 2d of the *Pecorone*.

3. *La Pêche del' Anneau* has suggested part of the 1st tale in the 6th Night of *Straparola*.

8. *Garce pour Garce* is from the *Repensa merces* in Poggio's *Facetiae*.

9. *La Mari Maquereau de sa Femme*, a story here told of a knight of Burgundy, is from the Fabliau *Le Meunier d' Aleus*, or the 206th of *Sacchetti* (see p. 246). It also corresponds with the 78th of *Morlini*, and the *Vir sibi cornua promovens* in the *Facetiae* of Poggio.

10. *Les Pastes d' Anguille*, is generally known by Fontaine's imitation under the same title.

11. *L' Encens au Diable*, which was originally told in the *Facetiae* of Poggio, is equally well known as the former story, being the *Hans Carvel's* ring of *Rabelais*, *Prior*, and *Fontaine*. It is also related in the 5th satire of *Ariosto*.

12. *Le Veau* is Fontaine's *Villageois qui cherche son veau*, and Poggio's *Asinus perditus*.

14. *Le Faiseur de Papes ou L'Homme de Dieu* is Fontaine's *L'Hermite*.

16. *Le Borgne Aveugle*, here told of a knight of Picardy and his wife, is from the 8th of *Petrus Alphonsus*, or c. 121 of the *Gesta Romanorum* (see p. 191). It has been imitated in the 23d of the 1st part of *Bandello*, in the Italian novels of *Giuseppe Orologi*, entitled *Successi Varii*, lately published by *Borromeo* in his *Notizie*, and in the 6th of the *Queen of Navarre*, where, as in *Orologi*, the husband is a domestic of Charles, Duke of *Alençon*.

19. *L'Enfant de Neige* is from the *Fabliau de L' Enfant qui fondit au Soleil* (Le Grand, vol. iii. p. 86).

21. *L'Abbesse Guerie* is Fontaine's *L'Abbesse Malade*.

23. *La Procureuse passe la Raye* has been taken from the *Fabliau du Curé qui possade une Pierre* (Le Grand, vol. iii. p. 249).

24. *La Botte Ademi*, is the story of a young woman, who being pursued and overtaken in a wood by an amorous knight, and seeing no hope of escape, offers to remain if he will allow her to pull off his boots: This being agreed to, she draws one of them half off, and thus effects her escape. This is part of the subject of an old English ballad, entitled, *The Baffled Knight, or Lady's Policy*, published in *Percy's Relics*.

32. *Les Dames Dismées* is the *Cordeliers de Catalogne* of Fontaine.

34. *Seigneur Dessus—Seigneur Dessous* is the *Fabliau Du Clerc qui se cacha derriere un Coffre* (Le Grand, vol. iii. p. 303).

37. *Le Benetrier d' Ordure* is Fontaine's *On ne s' Avise jamais de tout*.

38. *Une Verge pour l' Autre* is from the 8th of 7th of *Boccaccio*. (See p. 232).

50. *Change pour Change*. This is the story which *Sterne*, in his *Tristram Shandy* (vol. iv. c. 29), says, is told by *Selden*. It was originally the 14th of *Sacchetti*, but there the woman is the young man's stepmother, instead of his grandmother.—“E questo,” says he in his defence, “mio padre che ebbe a fare co tanto tempo con mia madre, e mai non gli disse una parola torta; ed ora perche mi ha trovato giacer con la moglie mi vuole uccidere come voi vedete.” This is also the *Justa Excusatio* of the *Facetiae* of Poggio.



52. *Les Trois Monumens*, is merely translated from the 16th tale of Sacchetti. It is the story of a son who receives three advices from his father, which he disregards, and the consequences of his disobedience.

60. *Les Nouveaux freres Mineurs* is from the Fabliau Frere Denise Cordelier (Le Grand, vol. iii. p. 295).

61. *Le Cocu Dupé*, from the first part of the Fabliau Les Cheveux coupés, by the Trouveur Guerin (Le Grand, vol. ii. p. 280).

69. *L'Honneste femme a Deux Maris*. A young gentleman of Flanders, while in the service of the King of Hungary, was taken prisoner and made a slave by the Turks. He had left a beautiful wife behind him in his own country, who, when all hopes of her husband's return had vanished, was courted by many suitors. She long resisted their importunities, still fondly hoping that her husband was yet alive. At length, at the end of nine years, she was in a manner forced by his and her own relations to enter into a second marriage. A few months after the celebration of the nuptials, her first husband having escaped from slavery, arrived at Artois, and his wife hearing the intelligence, expired in paroxysms of despair. This is obviously the origin of Southern's celebrated tragedy of Isabella, and perhaps of the history of Donna Mencia de Mosquera, the lady whom Gil Blas delivers from the cave of the robbers.

78. *Le Mari Confesseur* is the Fabliau du Chevalier qui fist sa femme confesser : (Le Grand, vol. iv. p. 90) : for the various transmigrations of this story (see p. 230).

79. *L'Ane Retrouvé* is the Circulator of Poggio.

80. *La Bonne Mesure* corresponds with Poggio's Aselli Priapus.

85. *Le Curé Cloué*, from the Fabliau le Forgeron de Creil (Le Grand, 4. 124).

88. *Le Cocu Sauvé*, from Fabliau La Borgoise d'Orleans (Le Grand, 4. p. 287). This is the Fraus Muliebris of Poggio.

90. *La Bonne Malade* is Poggio's Venia rite Negata.

91. *La Femme Obeissante* is his Novum Supplicii genus.

93. *La Postilone sur le Dos* in his Quomodo calceis Parcatur.

95. *Le Doit du Moine Gueri* is Poggio's Digiti Tumor. It thus appears that many of the Cent Nouvelles coincide with the Facetiae. I do not believe, however, that they were borrowed from that production, as they were written nearly at the same period that the Facetiae were related by Poggio and other clerks of the Roman chancery in the *Buggiale* of the Vatican; both were probably derived from stories which had become current in France and Italy by means of the Fabliaux of the Trouveurs.

96. *Le Testament Cynique*. A curate having buried his dog in the church-yard, is threatened with punishment by his superior. Next day he brings the prelate fifty crowns, which he says the dog had saved from his earnings, and bequeathed to the bishop in his testament. This story, which corresponds with the Canis Testamentum in Poggio's Facetiae, is from Le Testament de l'Ane (Le Grand, vol. iii. p. 107), a fabliau of the Trouveur Rutebeuf, to whom it probably came from the east, as it is told by a very ancient Turkish poet, Lamai, also called Abdallah Ben Mamoud, author of a collection of Facetiae and Bon Mots, in five chapters. It has been imitated in Le Chien de Sahed, one of Gueulette's Contes Tartares, and is also told in the history of Don Raphael, in Gil Blas.

It is thus evident that a great proportion of the Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles are derived from those inexhaustible stories of fiction, the Fabliaux of the Trouveurs; and as only a small selection has been published by Le Grand and Barbazan, it may be conjectured that many more are borrowed from fabliaux which have not yet seen the light, and may probably remain for ever buried in the French libraries.

The Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles never were translated into English: Beatrice, indeed, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, suspects she will be told she had her good wit out of the Hundred Merry Tales, which led Shakspeare's commentators to suppose that this might be some version of the Cent Nouvelles, which was fashionable in its day, but had afterwards disappeared. An old black-letter book, however, entitled, "A Hundreth Mery Tales," to which Beatrice probably alludes, was lately picked up from a bookseller's stall in England,



and it proves to be a totally different work from the Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles.

The tales of the Queen of Navarre, written in imitation of the Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, were first published under the title of *Histoire des Amans Fortunés*, in 1558, which was nine years after the death of their author.

These stories are the best known and most popular in the French language, a celebrity for which they were probably as much indebted to the rank and distinguished character of the author, as to their intrinsic merit. The manner in which they are introduced, is sufficiently ingenious, and bears a considerable resemblance to the frame of the Canterbury Tales. In the month of September, the season in which the baths of the Pyrenees begin to have some efficacy, a number of French ladies and gentlemen assembled at the springs of Caulderets. At the time when it was customary to return, there came rains so uncommon and excessive, that a party who made an attempt to arrive at Therbes, in Gascony, finding the streams swollen, and all the bridges broken down, were obliged to seek shelter in the monastery De Notre Dame de Serrance, on the Pyrenees. Here they were forced to remain till a bridge should be thrown over an impassable stream. As they were assured that this work would occupy ten days, they resolved to amuse themselves meanwhile with relating stories every day, from noon till vespers, in a beautiful meadow near the banks of the river Gave.

The number of the company amounted to ten, and there were ten stories related daily: the amusement was intended also to have lasted ten days, in order to complete the hundred novels, whence the book has been sometimes called *Les Cent Nouvelles de la Reine de Navarre*; but, in fact, it stops at the 73d tale, near the commencement of the 8th day. The conversations on the characters and incidents of the last related tale, and which generally introduce the subject of the new one, are much longer than in the Italian novels, and, indeed, occupy nearly one half of the work. Some of the remarks are quaint and comical, others are remarkable for their *naïveté*, while a few breathe the conceits of the Italian sonnetteers: Thus, "it is said that jealousy is love, but I deny it, for though

jealousy be produced by love, as ashes are by fire, yet jealousy extinguishes love, as ashes smother the flame."

Of the tales themselves, few are original; for, except about half a dozen which are historically true, and are mentioned as having fallen under the knowledge and observation of the Queen of Navarre, they may all be traced to the *Fabliaux*, the Italian novels, and the Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles. Few are either of a serious or atrocious description—they consist for the most part in contrivances for assignations—amorous assaults ingeniously repelled—intrigues ingeniously accomplished or ludicrously detected. Through the whole work, the monks, especially the Cordeliers, are treated with much severity, and are represented as committing, and sometimes with impunity, even when discovered, the most cruel, deceitful, and immoral actions. When we have already seen ecclesiastical characters treated with much contumely by private writers, in the age, and near the seat, of papal supremacy, it will not excite surprise that they should be so represented by a queen, who was a favourer of the new opinions, and an enemy to the Romish superstitions.

But while so many tales of the Queen of Navarre had been borrowed from earlier productions, they appear in their turn to have suggested much to subsequent writers. Thus, the 8th tale, which is from the *fabliau* of Le Meunier d'Aleus, and also occurs in the *Facetiae* of Poggio, in Sacchetti, and the 9th of the Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, seems the version of the story which has suggested the plot of Shirley's comedy of the Gamester (afterwards printed under the title of *The Gamesters*), where Mrs Wilding substitutes herself for Penelope, with whom her husband had an assignation, and he, to discharge a game debt, gives up the adventure to his friend Hazard. The 36th story concerning the President of Grenoble, which is taken from the 6th novel of the 3d decade of Cinthio, or the 47th of the Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, has suggested to the same dramatist that part of his *Love's Cruelty*, which turns on the concealment of Hippolito's intrigue with Clariana, by the contrivance of her husband.

The 30th coincides with the 35th of the 2d



part of Bandello, and the plot of Walpole's *Mysterious Mother* (see p. 273).

38. Which was originally the 72d tale of Morlini, is the story of a lady whose husband went frequently to a farm he had in the country. His wife suspecting the cause of his absence, sends provisions and all accommodations to the mistress for whose sake he went to the farm, in order to provide for the next visit, which has the effect of recalling the alienated affections of her husband. This story is in the MS. copy of the *Varii Successi* of Orologi, mentioned by Borromeo. The French and Italian tales agree in the most minute circumstances, even in the name of the place where the lady resided, which is Tours in both. This tale is related in a colloquy of Erasmus, entitled *Uxor Μυμφαγανος* sive *Conjugium*. It also occurs in Albion's England, a poem, by William Warner, who was a celebrated writer in the reign of Queen Elizabeth: those stanzas, which contain the incident, have been extracted from that poetical epitomé of British history, and published in Percy's *Relics*, under the title of the *Patient Countess*.

*La Servante Justifiée* of Fontaine, is from the 45th novel of this collection. It was probably taken from the fabliau of some *Trouveur*, who had obtained it from the east, as it corresponds with the story of the shop-keeper's wife in Nakshebi's Persian tales, known by the name of Tooti Nameh, or *Tales of a Parrot*. Another tale of the Queen of Navarre has a striking resemblance to the story of Theodosius and Constantia, whose loves and misfortunes have been immortalized by Addison and Sterne.

There were few works of any celebrity, written in France in imitation of the tales of the Queen of Navarre. The stories in the *Nouvelles Recreations* ou *Contes Nouveaux* have been generally attributed to Bonaventure des Perriers, one of the domestics of that princess; but in the edition 1733, it is shown that they were written by Nicholas Denysot, a French painter. They are not so long as those of the Queen of Navarre, and consist for the most part in epigrammatic conclusions, brought about by a very short relation. It is amusing, however, to trace in them the rudiments of our most ordinary jest books. The

following story, which occurs in the *Nouvelles Recreations*, may be found in almost every production of the kind from the *Facetiae* of Hierocles, to the last *Encyclopædia* of Wit. An honest man in Poitiers sent his two sons for their improvement to Paris. After some time they both fell sick; one died, and the survivor, in a letter to his father, said, "This is to acquaint you that it is not I who am dead, but my brother William, though it be very true that I was worse than he." It has been said that Porson once intended to publish Joe Miller with a commentary, in order to show that all his jests were derived originally from the Greek. This he could not have done, but they may be all easily traced to Greek authors, the Eastern Tales, or the French and Italian novels of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Among the French tales of the 16th century may be mentioned the *Contes Amoureux* of Jeanne Flore; *Le Printemps* de Jaques Yver, published in 1572; *L'Eté* de Benigne Poissenot, 1583, and *Les Facetieuses Journées*, of Gabriel Chapuis.

The more serious and tragic relations of the Italians were diffused in France during the 16th century, by means of the well-known work of Belleforest, and were imitated in the *Histoires Tragiques* of Rosset, one of whose stories is the foundation of the most celebrated drama of Ford, who has indeed chosen a revolting subject, yet has represented perhaps in too fascinating colours the loves of Giovanni and Annabella.

*Les Histoires Prodigieuses* de Boaistuan, published in 1561, seems to be the origin of such stories as appear in the *Wonders of Nature*, *Marvellous Magazine*, &c. We are assured that, in the Hebrides, wheat grows on the tops of the trees, and that the leaves, when they fall to the ground, are immediately changed to singing birds: there are, besides, a good many relations of monstrous births. There is also the common story of a person who was drowned by mistaking the echo of his own cry, for the voice of another. Arriving on the bank of a river, he asked loudly, "s'il n'y avoit point de peril a passer?—*Passez—Est ce par ici?—par ici.*"

Towards the close of the 16th, and beginning of the 17th century, a prodigious multi-



tude of tales were written in Spain, in imitation of the Italian novels: "Troppo in lungo anderebbe," says Lampillas (*Saggio Storico del. let. Spagnuola*, part ii. tom. 3, p. 195), "se io volessi accennare il portentoso numero di novelle Spagnuole uscite a quei tempi, e trasportate nelle pui colte lingue d' Europa." These Spanish novels are generally more detailed in the incidents than their Italian models, and have also received very considerable modifications from the manners and customs of the country in which they were produced. Those compositions, which in Italy presented alternate pictures of savage revenge, licentious intrigue, and gross buffoonery, are characterised by a high romantic spirit of gallantry, and jealousy of family honour, but above all, by constant nocturnal scuffles on the streets. The tales of Gerardo, the *Novelas Exemplares* of Cervantes, the *Prodigios y Successos d'Amor* of Montalvan, and the *Novelas Amoras* of Camerino, all written towards the end of the 16th, or commencement of the 17th century, are scarcely less interesting than the French or Italian tales, in illustrating the manners of the people, the progress of fiction, and its transmission from the novelist to the dramatic poet. Beaumont and Fletcher have availed themselves as much of the novels of Gerardo and Cervantes, as of the tales of Cinthio or Bandello, and many of their most popular productions, as the Spanish

Curate, *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, *Chances*, *Love's Pilgrimage*, and *Fair Maid of the Inn*, may be easily traced to a Spanish original. I fear, however, that to protract this investigation would be more curious than profitable, as enough has already been said to establish the rapid and constant progress of the stream of fiction, during the periods in which we are engaged, and its frequent transfusion from one channel of literature to another.

Indeed, I have perhaps already occupied the reader longer than at first may seem proper or justifiable, with the subject of Italian tales, and the imitations of them. But, besides their own intrinsic value, as pictures of morals and of manners, other circumstances contributed to lead me into this detail. In no other species of writing is the transmission of fable, and, if I may say so, the commerce of literature, so distinctly marked. The larger works of fiction resemble those productions of a country which are consumed within itself, while tales, like the more delicate and precious articles of traffic, which are exported from their native soil, have gladdened and delighted every land. They are the ingredients from which Shakspeare, and other enchanterers of his day, have distilled those magical drops which tend so much to sweeten the lot of humanity, by occasionally withdrawing the mind from the cold and naked realities of life to visionary scenes and visionary bliss.

## CHAPTER IX.

Origin of Spiritual Romance—*Legenda Aurea*—*Contes Devots*—*Guerino Meschino*—*Lycidas et Cleorithe*—*Romans de Camus*, &c.—*Pilgrim's Progress*.

WE have now travelled over those fields of fiction which have been cultivated by the writers of chivalry and the Italian novelists; but the task remains of surveying those other regions which the industry of succeeding times has explored, and I have yet to give some account of those different classes of romance which appeared in France and other countries of Europe, previous to the introduction of the modern novel.

It has already been remarked, that the variations of romance correspond in a considerable degree with the variations of manners. Something, indeed, must be allowed to the caprice of taste, and something to the accidental direction of an original genius to a particular pursuit; but still, amid the variety, there is a certain uniformity, and when the character of an age or people is decided, it must give a tinge to the taste, and a direction



to the efforts, of those who court attention or favour, and who have themselves been nourished in existing prejudices and in commonly received opinions.

Of the natural principles of the human mind, none are more obvious than a spirit of religion ; and in certain periods of society, and under certain circumstances, this sentiment has been so prevalent as to constitute a feature in the character of the age. It was to be expected, therefore, that a feeling so general and powerful should have been gratified in every mode, and that, amongst others, the easy and magical charm of fiction should have formed one of the methods by which it was fostered and indulged.

In the times which succeeded the early ages of Christianity, the gross ignorance of many of its votaries rendered them but ill qualified to relish the abstract truths of religion, or unadorned precepts of morality. The plan was accordingly adopted of adducing examples, which might interest the attention and speak strongly to the feelings. Hence, from the zeal of some, and the artifice or credulity of other instructors, mankind were taught the duties of devotion by a recital of the achievements of spiritual knight errantry.

The history of Josaphat and Barlaam, of which an account has already been given, and which was written to inspire a taste for the ascetic virtues, seems to have been the origin of Spiritual Romance. It is true, that in the first ages of the church, many fictitious gospels were composed, full of improbable fables ; but, as they contained opinions in contradiction to what was deemed the orthodox faith, they were discountenanced by the fathers of the church, and soon fell into disrepute. On the other hand, the history of Josaphat and Barlaam, which was more sound in its doctrine, passed at an early period into the west of Europe, and through the medium of the old Latin translation, which was a common manuscript, and was even printed so early as the year 1470, it became a very general favourite.

As far back as the 4th century, St Athanasius visited Rome, in order to obtain succour from the western church against the Arian heresy, which then prevailed in the east ; and during his abode in Italy, he wrote the life of St Anthony, the most renowned

Cenobite of the age. From the earliest periods of the church, innumerable legends had been written or compiled by Gregory of Tours and St Gregory, selections from which have been more recently published under the title of *Vies des peres de desert*. All these legends present nearly the same circumstances—the victims of monastic superstition invariably retire to solitude, where they make themselves as uncomfortable as they can by every species of penance and mortification ; they are alternately terrified and tempted by the demon, over whom they invariably prevail ; their solitude is interrupted by those who come to admire them, which must have been the great motive for perseverance ; they all cure diseases, and wash the feet of lepers ; they foresee their own decease, and, spite of their efforts and prayers, their existence is usually protracted to a preternatural duration.

One peculiarity in the history of these saints is the dominion which they exercise over the animal creation. Thus, St Helenus, who dwelt in the deserts of Egypt, arriving one Sabbath at a monastery on the banks of the Nile, was justly scandalised to find that mass was not to be performed that day. The monks excused themselves on the ground that their priest, who was on the opposite side of the river, hesitated to cross on account of a crocodile which had posted himself on the bank, and was, with some reason, suspected to be lying in wait for the holy man. Saint Helenus immediately went in quest of the crocodile, and commanded the animal to ferry him over on his back to the other side of the river, where he found the priest ; but could not persuade this man of little faith to embark with him on the crocodile. He accordingly repassed alone, but being in very bad humour at the ultimate failure of his expedition, he commanded the crocodile to expire without farther delay, an injunction which the monster fulfilled with due expedition and humility.

St Florentin finding that the solitude to which he had withdrawn was more than he could endure, begged some solace from heaven. One day, accordingly, after prayer in the fields, he found at his return a bear stationed at the entrance to his cell. On the approach of St Florentin the bear made his obeisance, and so far from exhibiting any symptoms of a natu-



ral moroseness, he testified, as well as his imperfect education permitted, that he stood there for the service of the holy man. Our saint, however, received so much pleasure from his company, that he feared incurring a violation of his oaths of penance: he therefore resolved to abstain from the society of the bear during the greater part of the day. As there were five or six sheep in his cavern, which no one led out to pasture, the idea struck the saint of having them tended by the bear. This flock at first showed some repugnance; but, encouraged by the assurances of the saint, and mild demeanour of the shepherd, they followed him pleasantly to the fold. St Florentine usually enjoined his bear to bring them back at six, but on days of great fasting and prayer, he commanded him not to return till nine. The bear was punctual to his time, and whether his master appointed six or nine, this exemplary animal never confounded the hours, nor mistook one for the other!

This miracle continued for some years, but at length the demon, envious of the proficiency of the bear, prompted certain evil-disposed monks in the vicinity, who at his instigation laid snares and slew him. The saint could do no more than curse the unknown perpetrators of this act, who, in consequence, all died next day of putrid disorders.

Perhaps one cause of the popularity of these legends was the frequent details concerning the sexual temptations to which the saints were exposed. The holy men were usually triumphant, and almost the only example to the contrary is that of St Macarius. This saint, when far advanced in life, resolved to retire from the world, leaving his wife and family to shift for themselves. The angel Raphael pointed out to him a frightful solitude, where he chose as his residence a cavern inhabited by two young lions which had been exposed by their mother. After he had lived here many years, the demon became envious of his virtue, and seduced him under form of a beautiful female, a figure which he assumes with great facility. St Macarius somehow instantly perceived the full extent of the iniquity into which he had been ensnared, and was, as may be believed, in the utmost consternation. The lions, though not aware of the whole calamity, were so much scan-

dalized at his conduct, that they forsook the cavern. They returned, however, soon after, and dug a ditch the length of a human body. The repentant sinner, conceiving this to be the species of penance which these animals considered most suitable to his transgression, lay down in the hole, where the lions, with much solemnity and lamentation, covered him with earth, except head and arms. In this position he remained three years, subsisting on the herbs which grew within arms length. At the end of this period, who should reappear but the two lions, who dug out their old master with the same gravity they had employed at his interment. This was accepted by the saint as a sign that his sins were forgiven, a conjecture which was confirmed by the appearance of our Saviour at the entrance of the cavern. Henceforth Macarius distrusted every woman; and indeed the continence of the saints must have been wonderfully aided by their knowledge of the demon's power to assume this fascinating figure, as they would constantly dread being thus entrapped into the embraces of the common enemy of mankind.

The legends resembling those above mentioned, which were chiefly of Latin invention, were probably little countenanced under the more mild and rational institutions of St Benedict, the first founder of the monastic orders; but were subsequently drawn from obscurity, to support the system of the ascetic followers of St Francis.

Besides the Latin legends, many forgeries by the monks of the Greek church were from time to time imported into France and Italy. To such writers the oriental fictions and mode of fabling were familiar, and hence we find that from imitation the western legends of the saints frequently resemble a romance, both in the structure and decorations of the story. Even the more early Latin lives had been carried to Constantinople, where they were translated into Greek, with new embellishments of eastern imagination. These being returned to Europe, were restored to their native language, and superseded the more simple originals. Other Latin legends, of still later composition, acquired their decorations from the Arabian fictions, which had at length become current in Europe.



Such romantic inventions were admirably suited to serve the purposes of superstition. Many extravagant conceptions, too, were likely to arise spontaneously in the visionary minds of the authors. A believing and ignorant age, also, received as truth, what in the lives of the saints was sometimes only intended as allegory. The malignant spirit, so troublesome at bed and board to the monks and anchorites, might only have signified, that even in the desert we in vain seek for tranquillity, that temptations ever pursue, and that our passions assail us as strongly in the gloom of solitude, as in the revelry of the world. Imitators, whose penetration was inferior to their credulity, quickly invented similar relations, from which no instruction could be drawn, nor allegory deduced.

The grand repertory of pious fiction seems to have been the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine, a Genoese dominican,—a work entitled *Golden* from its popularity, on the same principle that this epithet was bestowed on the Ass of Apuleius. A similar composition in Greek, by Simon Metaphrastes, written about the end of the 10th century, was the prototype of this work of the 13th century, which comprehends the lives of individual saints, whose history had already been written, or was current from tradition. The *Golden Legend*, however, does not consist solely of the biography of saints, but is said in the Colophon to be interspersed with many other beautiful and strange relations, which were probably extracted from the *Gesta Longobardorum*, and other sources too obscure and voluminous to be easily traced; indeed, one of the original titles of the *Legenda Aurea* was *Historia Lombardica*. The work of Voragine was translated into French by Jean de Vignai, and was one of the three books from which Caxton's *Golden Legend* was compiled.

From the store-house of Jacobus de Voragine, the history of well-known saints was subsequently extracted. There we find the account of St George and the Dragon, and also of the Sleepers of Ephesus;—a story which Gibbon has not disdained to introduce into his history (c. 33), and so universal, that it has been related in the Koran. The life of Paul, originally written by St Jerome, occurs

in the *Legenda*, and the abridgment given by Professor Porson, in his letters to Archdeacon Travis (p. 30), may serve as a specimen of the nature of the incidents related in the *Golden Legend*.

“Anthony thought himself the most perfect monk in the world, till he was told in a vision, that there was one much more perfect than he, and that he must set out on a visit to the prince of anchorites. Anthony departed on this errand, and in his journey through a desert saw a centaur. Jerome modestly doubts whether it was the natural produce of the soil, fruitful in monsters, or whether the devil assumed this shape to fright the holy man. Sometime after he saw a satyr, with an horned forehead and goat's feet, who presented him him with some dates, as hostages of peace, and confessed that he was one of the false deities whom the deluded Gentiles worshipped. At last, Anthony, quite weary and exhausted, found Paul, and, while they were discoursing together, who should appear on a sudden, but a raven, with a loaf, which he laid down in their sight. ‘Every day,’ said Paul to Anthony, ‘I receive half a loaf; but on your arrival Christ has given his soldiers double provision.’ He also told Anthony that he himself should shortly die; he, therefore, desired to be buried in the same cloak that Anthony received from Athanasius. Anthony set out full speed to fetch the cloak, but Paul was dead before his return. Here was a fresh distress; Anthony could find no spade nor pick-axe to dig a grave. But while he was in this perplexity, two lions approached with so piteous a roaring, that he perceived they were lamenting the deceased after their unpolished fashion. They then began to scratch the earth with their feet, till they had hollowed a place big enough to contain a single body. After Anthony had buried his friend's carcase in this hole, the two lions came, and, by their signs and fawning, asked his blessing, which he kindly gave them, and they departed in very good humour.”

The *Tresor de l' Ame* is somewhat of the same description with the *Legenda Aurea*. It was translated from Latin into French, and printed in the end of the 15th century; but had been composed nearly 200 years before that period. This work consists of a collection of histories, but it more frequently reports



miracles operated on proper application, by the posthumous intercession of saints, than prodigies performed in the course of their lives. The longest article is an account of St Patrick's purgatory, which is mentioned in the *Legenda Aurea*, but is here minutely described from the recital of a Spanish knight, who had been sent thither to expiate his crimes.

Besides the legends of the saints, a species of spiritual tales (*Contes Devots*), some in prose, and others in verse, was prevalent in France during the 12th and 13th centuries. These were probably written with a view of counteracting the effects of the witty and licentious tales of the *Trouveurs* and minstrels. They were mostly the production of monks, who believed the absurdities they heard, or scrupled not to invent new ones, to raise the reputation of the relics of their convents.

The most ancient collection of spiritual tales, is ascribed by some to Ceriton, an English monk of the 12th century; and by others to Hugo de St Victoire, a Parisian. It contains a mixture of *Æsopian* fable, with a great variety of pious and profane histories. There is a long account of a kind of wren, named after St Martin. One day, while sitting on a tree, this animal, which had long and slender legs, exclaimed in the fulness of its pride, "It matters not to me though the heavens fall, for, by aid of my strong limbs, I shall be able to support them." Presently a leaf dropped from the tree, and the foolish boaster immediately flew away, exclaiming, "St Martin! St Martin! help your poor bird!"

Le Grand mentions two subsequent collections of spiritual tales in French verse, the first by Coinsi or Comsi, Prior of a monastery at Soissons, who died in 1236. Many of the tales in this metrical compilation had been originally written in Latin, by Hugues Farsi, who was also a monk of Soissons. A great proportion of the stories of Farsi relates to miracles performed in the neighbourhood of Soissons by the Virgin, and in her fall by one of her slippers preserved in the monastery. These Comsi has translated into French rhyme, adding some others on devout topics, furnished by tradition, or invented by himself, and has given to the whole the title of *Miracles de Notre Dame*. The devil, incensed

against him (as the author himself informs us), on account of the good which his work was likely to produce, tried to choke him one day; fortunately he had time to make the sign of the cross, but some time after the disappointed fiend stole from him certain valuable relics he possessed.

The second compilation alluded to by Le Grand, is entitled *Vies des Peres*, either because it relates the spiritual adventures of hermits, or because it is partly extracted from the *Vies des Peres du Desert*. The tales in this collection are said by Le Grand to be far superior to those of Comsi, both in the choice of subjects and the art of narrative. It accordingly has furnished Le Grand with the best of those stories published under the title of *Contes Devots*, and which form a species of continuation or supplement to his *Contes et Fabliaux*.

Formerly the lives of the saints, and the miracles operated by their relics, had been the favourite topics; but, towards the end of the 11th, and in the course of the subsequent centuries, the wonders performed by the Virgin became the prevailing theme. To her a peculiar reverence was at that time paid in France. A number of cathedrals and monasteries were dedicated to her honour, and she became the object of the most fervent worship. Hence she appears as the heroine of the histories of Farsi, the metrical compositions of Comsi, and the *Lives of the Fathers*. In all these works there were attributed to her an infinite love towards man,—a power almost omnipotent in heaven,—and an inclination, not only to preserve the souls, but to husband the reputations of the greatest criminals, provided she had been treated by them with proper deference and respect.

A young and handsome nun, we are told, was the vestry-keeper of a convent, and part of her daily employment was to ring for matins. In her way to the chapel for this purpose, she was obliged to pass through a gallery, where there stood an image of the Virgin, which she never failed to salute with an Ave. The devil, meanwhile, who had plotted the ruin of this nun, insidiously whispered in her ear that she would be much happier in the world than detained in perpetual imprisonment; that, with the advantages



of youth and beauty which she possessed, there were no pleasures she might not procure, and that it would be time enough to immure herself in a convent when age should have withered her charms. At the same time the tempter rendered the chaplain enamoured of the nun he had been thus seducing, who, having been already prepared for love solicitations, was easily persuaded to elope with him. For this purpose she appointed the chaplain a rendezvous on the following night at the convent gate. She accordingly came to the place of assignation; but, having as usual said an Ave to the Virgin in passing through the gallery, she met at the gate a woman of severe aspect, who would not permit her to proceed. On the following night the same prayer having been repeated, a similar obstacle was presented. The chaplain having now become impatient, sent an emissary to complain, and having learned the reason of his mistress not holding her appointment, advised her to pass through the gallery without her wonted Ave maria, and even to turn away from the image of the Virgin. Our nun was not sufficiently hardened to follow these instructions literally, but proceeded to the rendezvous by a different way, and of course met with no impediment in her elopement with the chaplain.

Still the Aves she had said from the time of her entrance into the convent were not thrown away; Our Lady was determined that the shame of so faithful a servant should not be divulged. She assumed the clothes and form of her votary; and, during the absence of the fugitive, assiduously discharged all her employments, by guarding the vestments, ringing the bells, lighting the lamps, and singing in the quire.

After ten years spent in the dissipation of the world, the fugitive nun, tired of libertinism, abandoned the companion of her flight, and conceived the design of returning to the monastery to perform penance. On the way to her former residence, she arrived one night at a house not far distant from the convent, and was charitably received. After supper a conversation having arisen on various topics, she took an opportunity of inquiring what was said of the vestry-keeper of the neighbouring monastery, who had eloped about ten

years before with the chaplain. The mistress of the house was much scandalized at the question, and replied that never had pure virtue been so shamefully calumniated; that the nun to whom she alluded was a perfect model of sanctity; and that Heaven itself seemed to bear witness to her merits, for that she wrought miracles daily.

This discourse was a mystery for the penitent; she passed the night in prayer, and in the morning repaired, in much agitation, to the porch of the convent. A nun appeared and asked her name. "I am a sinful woman," she replied, "who have come hither for the sake of penance;" and then she confessed her elopement and the errors of her life. "I," said the pretended nun, "am Mary, whom you faithfully served, and who, in return, have here concealed your shame." The Virgin then declared that she had discharged the duties of vestry-keeper, exhorted the nun to repentance, and restored her the religious habit which she had left at her elopement. After this the Virgin disappeared, and the nun resumed her functions without any one suspecting what had happened. Nor would it ever have been known had she not herself disclosed it. The sisters loved her the more for her adventure, and esteemed her doubly, as she was manifestly under the special protection of the Mother of God.

In this tale, of which there are different metrical versions, and which also occurs in the *Tresor de l'Ame*, it will be remarked that the Virgin acts as a housemaid; in another story she performs the part of a procuress, and in a third she officiates in an obstetrical capacity to an abbess, who had been frail and imprudent. Indeed, she is in general represented as performing the most degrading offices, and for the most worthless characters.

While the Virgin is the heroine in these compositions, the devil is usually the principal male performer. The monks of a certain monastery wished to ornament the gate of their church. One of their number, who was Sacristan, and who understood sculpture, placed on it a beautiful image of the Virgin. In most of the churches built in the time of these spiritual fablers, there was a representation of the Last Judgment near the entrance. Our



Saviour appeared on that occasion in the design of the Sacristan, with the elect on his right-hand, and the damned on his left. Among the latter was a Satan, armed with an iron hook, and so hideous that no one could look on him without horror. The original, offended at the liberties which had been used with his figure, came one day to inquire at the artist why he had made him so ill-favoured. The Sacrist plainly told him it had been done from personal dislike, and for the express purpose of rendering him odious. These reasons not appearing satisfactory, the Enemy threatened him with vengeance if he did not change the figure in the course of the day. Next morning, when the devil came to look at the alterations, he found the Sacristan mounted on a scaffold, and employed in adding new horrors to the representation. "Since you are determined that we should be foes," exclaimed the irritated demon, "let us see how you can leap." With these words he overthrew the scaffolding; but the Sacristan had no sooner called the Virgin to his succour, than her image stretched out its arms to uphold him, and, after suspending him sometime in the air to give the beholders time to admire this beautiful miracle, she placed him gently on the ground, to Satan's infinite shame and mortification. Though humiliated by this failure, he did not renounce his schemes of vengeance, but adopted a new plan, which, at least, reflected more honour on his ingenuity than the overthrow of the scaffold.

Near the monastery there resided a young and devout widow, and between her and the Sacristan the Tempter excited a reciprocal attachment. The lovers resolved to fly to a foreign land, and the monk annexed to this design the scheme of carrying with him the treasures of the convent. They eloped at an appointed hour, and the Sacristan, according to his plan, carried off the cross, the chalices, and censers. Meanwhile the fiend was on watch, and scarcely had his enemy cleared the precincts of the monastery, when he ran through all the dormitories, calling out that a monk was carrying off the treasures of the abbey. The fugitives were pursued and taken, but the lady was permitted to retire unmolested. "This," adds the fabler, "would not happen in these days; there are few

monks at present who would not have profited by the embarrassment of the fair captive."

As for the Sacristan, he was conducted to a dungeon. There the devil suddenly appeared to insult his misfortunes, but at the same time suggested a mode of reconciliation. "Efface," said he, "the villainous figure you have drawn, give me a handsome one in exchange, and I promise to extricate you from this embarrassment." The offer tempted the monk; instantly his chains fell off, and he went to sleep in his own cell. Next morning the astonishment of his brethren was excessive when they beheld him going at large, and busied with his usual employments. They seized him and brought him back to his dungeon, but what was their surprise to find the devil occupying the place of the Sacristan, and with head bent down, and arms crossed on his breast, assuming a devout and penitential appearance. The matter having been reported to the abbot, he came in procession to the dungeon, with cross and holy water. Satan, of course, had to decamp, *nolens volens*, but signalized his departure by seizing the abbot by the hood, and carrying him up into the air. Fortunately for the father he was so fat that he slipped through his clothes, and fell naked in the midst of the assembly, while the fiend only carried off the cowl, which, on account of his horns, proved perfectly useless to him.

It was, of course, believed that the robbery had been committed by the demon in shape of the Sacristan, who soon after fulfilled his promise of forming a handsome statue of his old enemy and late benefactor. "This tale," says the author, "was read every year in the monastery of the White Monks for *their edification*."

The monks gave to the devil a human form, hideous, however, and disgusting. In the miniatures of manuscripts, the paintings in cloisters, and figures on the gates and windows of churches, he is represented as a black withered man, with a long tail, and claws to his feet and hands. It was also believed that he felt much mortification in being thus portrayed.

One of the most celebrated stories in the spiritual tales, is "De l' Hermite qu'un Ange conduisit dans le Siecle." It is not in the



collection of Comsi, but occurs in the Vies des Peres, whence it has been abstracted by Le Grand.

A hermit, who had lived in solitude and penance from his earliest youth, began at length to murmur against Heaven, because he had not been raised to one of those happy and brilliant conditions of which his quest for alms sometimes rendered him witness. Why, thought the recluse, does the Creator load with benefits those who neglect him? Why does He leave his faithful servants in poverty and contempt? Why has not He, who formed the world, made all men equal? Why this partial allotment of happiness and misery?

To clear these doubts, the hermit resolved to quit his cell and visit the world, in search of some one who could remove them. He took his staff and set out on his journey.

Scarce had the solitary left his hermitage when a young man of agreeable aspect appeared before him. He was in the habit of a *sergent* (a word used to denote any one employed in military or civil service), but was in fact an angel in disguise. Having saluted each other, the celestial spirit informed the hermit that he had come to visit his friends in that district, and as it was tiresome to travel alone, he was anxious to find a companion to beguile the way. The recluse, whose project accorded wonderfully with the designs of the stranger, offered to accompany him, and they continued their journey together.

Night overtook the travellers before they had extricated themselves from a wood: fortunately, however, they perceived a hermitage, and went to beg an asylum. They were hospitably received by the solitary inhabitant, who gave them what provisions he could afford; but when the hour of prayer was come, the guests observed that their host was solely occupied in scouring a valuable cup from which they had drunk during the repast. The angel noted where the hermit had laid it, rose by night, concealed it, and in the morning, without saying a word, carried it off with him. His companion was informed on the road of this theft, and wished to return, for the purpose of restoring the goblet. "Stay," said the angel, "I had my reasons for acting

thus, and you will learn them soon; perhaps in my conduct you may again find cause of astonishment, but whatever you may see, know that it proceeds from a proper motive." The hermit was silent, and continued to follow his mysterious companion.

When tired with their journey, and wet with rain which had fallen during the whole day, they entered a populous town; and as they had no money, they were obliged to demand shelter from gate to gate in the name of God. They were everywhere refused an asylum, for Dom Argent, whom the English minstrels style Sir Penny, was then (says the tale), as he still is, more beloved than God. Though the rain still continued, they were forced to lie down on the outer stair of a house which belonged to a rich usurer, who would scarce have given a halfpenny to obtain Paradise. He at this moment appeared at the window. The travellers implored an asylum, but the miser shut the casement without reply. A servant, more compassionate than her master, at length obtained his permission to let them in, suffered them to lie on a little straw spread under the stair, and brought them a plate of peas, the relics of her master's supper. Here they remained during night in their wet clothes, without light and without fire. At day-break the angel, before their departure, went to pay his respects to their landlord, and presented him with the cup which he had stolen from his former host. The miser gladly wished them a good journey. On the way the hermit, of course, expressed his surprise, but was commanded by the angel to be circumspect in his opinions.

The evening of the third day brought them to a monastery, richly endowed. Here they were sumptuously entertained; but when they were about to depart, the angel set fire to the bed on which he had lain. On ascending a hill at some distance, the hermit perceived the monastery enveloped in flames. When informed that this also was the work of his fellow-traveller, he cursed the hour in which he had been associated with such a wretch, but was again reprimanded by the angel for his rash conclusions.

On the night of that day the pilgrims lodged with a wealthy burgess. Their host was a respectable old man, who had grown grey



with years, but lived happily with a beloved wife and an only son of ten years of age, who was his chief consolation. He entertained the travellers with much kindness, and bade them on the morrow an affectionate adieu.

To reach the high road, however, it was necessary to pass through the town, and to cross a river. Pretending that he was unacquainted with the way, the angel persuaded the old man to allow his son to accompany them to the bridge, and point out to them their path. The father awakened his child, who joyfully came to conduct the travellers. In passing the bridge the angel pushed him into the stream, by which he was instantly overwhelmed. "My work is accomplished," said the angel; "art thou satisfied?" The hermit fled with the utmost precipitation, and, having gained the fields, sat down to deplore the folly of having left his cell, for which God had punished him by delivering him up to a demon, of whose crimes he had become the involuntary accomplice.

While engaged in this lamentation, he was rejoined by the heavenly messenger, who thus addressed him:—"In thy cell thou hast arraigned the secret counsels of God; thou hast called in question his wisdom, and hast prepared to consult the world on the impenetrable depth of his designs. In that moment thy ruin was inevitable, had his goodness abandoned thee. But he has sent an angel to enlighten, and I have been commissioned for this ministry. I have in vain attempted to show thee that world which thou hast sought, without knowing it; my lessons are not understood, and must be explained more clearly. Thou hast seen the care of a goblet occupy the mind of a hermit, when he ought to have been fully engaged in the most important of duties: now that he is deprived of his treasure, his soul, delivered from foreign attachments, is devoted to God. I have bestowed the cup on the usurer as the price of the hospitality which he granted, because God leaves no good action without recompense, and his avarice will one day be punished. The monks of the abbey which I reduced to ashes were originally poor, and led an exemplary life—enriched by the imprudent liberality of the faithful, their manners have been corrupted; in the palace which they erected,

they were only occupied with the means of acquiring new wealth, or intrigues to introduce themselves into the lucrative charges of the convent. When they met in the halls, it was chiefly to amuse themselves with tales and with trifles. Order, duty, and the offices of the church were neglected. God, to correct them, has brought them back to their pristine poverty. They will rebuild a less magnificent monastery. A number of poor will subsist by the work, and they, being now obliged to labour the ground for their subsistence, will become more humble and better.

"I must approve of you in all things," said the hermit, "but why destroy the child who was serving us? why darken with despair the old age of the respectable father who had loaded us with benefits?" That old man," replied the angel, "was formerly occupied with doing good, but as his son approached to maturity he gradually became avaricious, from the foolish desire of leaving him a vast inheritance. The child has died innocent, and has been received among the angels. The father will resume his former conduct, and both will be saved; without that, which thou deemest a crime, both might have perished. Such, since thou requirest to know them, are the secret judgments of God amongst men, but remember that they have once offended thee. Return to thy cell and do penance. I reascend to Heaven."

Saying thus, the angel threw aside the terrestrial form he had assumed and disappeared. The hermit, prostrating himself on earth, thanked God for the paternal reproof his mercy had vouchsafed to send him. He returned to his hermitage, and lived so holily, that he not only merited the pardon of his error, but the highest recompense promised to a virtuous life.

This tale forms the eightieth chapter of the *Gesta Romanorum*, but there the conflagration of the monastery is omitted, and the strangulation of the infant in the cradle substituted in its place, while a new victim is conjured up for the submersion. Similar incidents are related in the *Sermones de Tempore* of a German monk of the 15th century. The story also occurs, with some additions and variations, in Howell's *Letters*, which were first published in 1650, but is professed



to be transcribed from Sir Philip Herbert's *Conceptions*. There, on first setting out on the journey, the angel tumbles a man into the river because he meant that night to rob his master: he next strangles a child: after which follows the apparently whimsical transference of the goblets. Last of all, the travellers meet with a merchant, who asks his way to the next town, but the angel, by misguiding him, preserves him from being robbed.<sup>1</sup> This deviation, I think, occurs in none of the other imitations, and it by no means forms a happy climax. The story has again been copied in the *Dialogues* of the Platonic theologian Dr Henry More. It has been inserted, as is well known, in the chapter of Voltaire's *Zadig*, *De l'Hermite qu'un Ange conduisit dans le siecle*, and it also forms the subject of the *Hermit of Parnel*. That poem bears a closer resemblance to the tale, as related in the *Gesta Romanorum*, than to any of the other versions. Its author, however, has improved the subject by a more ample development of the moral lesson, by a happier arrangement of the providential dispensations, and by reserving the discovery of the angel till the conclusion of the whole. But, on the other hand, the purloining the goblet in the *Conte Devot* might have been rationally expected to cure the hermit of his strange habit of scouring it in time of prayer, and the conflagration of the monastery might effectually have corrected the luxury and abuses that had crept into it; but *Parnel's* transference of the cup must have been altogether inadequate either for the reformation of the vain man, from whom it was taken away, or of the miser, on whom it was bestowed.

The first germ of this popular and widely diffused story may be found, though in a very rude and imperfect shape, in the eighteenth chapter of the *Koran*, entitled the *Cave*. Moses, while leading the children of Israel through the wilderness, found, at the meeting of two seas, the prophet Al Khedr, whom he accosted, "and begged to be instructed by him; and he answered, Verily thou canst not bear with me: for how canst thou patiently suffer those things, the knowledge whereof thou dost not comprehend? Moses replied,

Thou shalt find me patient, if God please; neither will I be disobedient unto thee in any thing. He said, If thou follow me, therefore, ask me not concerning any thing, until I shall declare the meaning thereof unto thee. So they both went on by the sea-shore, until they went up into a ship: and he made a hole therein. And Moses said unto him, Hast thou made a hole therein, that thou mightest drown those who are on board? Now hast thou done a strange thing. He answered, Did I not tell thee that thou couldest not bear with me? Moses said, Rebuke me not, because I did forget; and impose not on me a difficulty in what I am commanded. Wherefore they left the ship, and proceeded, until they met with a youth; and he slew him. Moses said, Hast thou slain an innocent person, without his having killed another? Now hast thou committed an unjust action. He answered, Did I not tell thee that thou couldest not bear with me? Moses said, If I ask thee concerning any thing hereafter, suffer me not to accompany thee: now hast thou received an excuse from me. They went forward, therefore, until they came to the inhabitants of a certain city, and they asked food of the inhabitants thereof; but they refused to receive them. And they found therein a wall, which was ready to fall down; and he set it upright. Whereupon Moses said unto him, If thou wouldest, thou mightest doubtless have received a reward for it. He answered, This shall be a separation between me and thee: but I will first declare unto thee the signification of that which thou couldest not bear with patience. The vessel belonged to certain poor men, who laboured in the sea: and I was minded to render it unserviceable, because there was a king behind them, who took every sound ship by force. As to the youth, his parents were true believers; and we feared lest he, being an unbeliever, should oblige them to suffer his perverseness and ingratitude: wherefore we desired that the Lord might give them a more righteous child in exchange for him, and one more affectionate towards them. And the wall belonged to two orphan youths of the city, and under it was a treasure hidden which belonged to them; and their father was a righteous man: and thy Lord was pleased

<sup>1</sup> Howell's Letters, b. 4. let. 4.



that they should attain their full age, and take forth their treasure, through the mercy of thy Lord. And I did not what thou hast seen of mine own will, but by God's direction. This is the interpretation of that which thou couldest not bear with patience." (Sale's Koran, c. 18).

Several other Contes Devots, like the story of the hermit, are of good moral tendency. The great proportion of them, however, are totally the reverse, as they tend to inculcate the doctrine that persons of the most profligate lives may be saved by the repetition of numerous Aves. In almost all, the perfection of morals and Christianity is represented as consisting in the recital of mass, in fasting and corporeal mortification; sometimes, though rarely, there is added the distribution of alms. A few of the tales, as *La Cour de Paradis*, one would think had been written for the purpose of turning every thing sacred into ridicule. Those relating to the sexual temptations, to which monks were subjected, as *Du Prevot d'Aquilée* and *D'un Hermite et du duc Malaquin*, are extremely licentious; and it is worthy of remark, that the lives of the nuns and monks are represented as much more profligate in the Contes Devots than in the lighter compositions of the Trouveurs.

These tales, whatever may be their faults or merits, were transmitted from age to age, and were frequently copied into the ascetic works of the following centuries. From the shade of the monastery, where they had their birth, they passed into the bosom of private families. It was also customary to introduce tales of this nature into the homilies of the succeeding periods. A very long and curious story of this description, concerning a dissolute bishop named Eudo, may be found in one of the *Sermones de Justitia* of Maillard, a preacher of the 15th century. In 1389, a system of divinity appeared at Paris, entitled *Doctrinal de Sapyence*, translated by Caxton under title of *Court of Sapyence*, which abounds with a multitude of apologues and parables. About the year 1480, there was printed a promptuary or repository of examples for composing sermons, written by a Dominican friar at Basil, who informs us, in a sort of prologue, that St Dominic, in his

discourses, always abounded in embellishments of this description.

Besides, it may be remarked, that the spiritual romance and the tales of chivalry have many features common to both. In the latter, the leading subject is frequently a religious enterprise. The quest of the Sangreal was a main object with the knights of the Round Table, and the exploits of the paladins of Charlemagne chiefly tended to the expulsion of the Saracens and triumph of the Christian faith. The history of *Guerino Meschino* may be adduced as an instance of an intermediate work between the chivalrous and spiritual romances. It is full of the achievements of knight errantry, the love of princesses, and discomfiture of giants; yet it appears that the author's principal object was the edification of the faithful. This production was of a fame and popularity likely to produce imitation. Spain and Italy have claimed the merit of its original composition, but the pretensions of the latter country seem the best founded, and it is now generally believed to have been written by a Florentine, called *Andrea Patria*, in the 14th century. Be this as it may, it was first printed in Italian at Padua, 1473, in folio, and afterwards appeared at Venice, 1477, folio; Milan, 1520, 4to; and Venice, 1559, 12mo. It is the subject of a poem by Tullia Arragona, an Italian poetess of the 16th century. A French translation was printed in 1490. Mad. Oudot has included it in the *Bibliothèque Bleue*, with refinements of style which ill compensate for the *naïveté* of the original.

Guerin was the son of Millon, king of Albania, a monarch descended from the house of Burgundy. The young prince's birth was the epoch of the commencement of his parents' misfortunes. His father and mother were dethroned and imprisoned by an usurper, who would also have slain their heir had not his nurse embarked with him in a vessel for Constantinople. She unfortunately died during the voyage, but the child was taken care of, and afterwards educated, by a Greek merchant, who happened to be in the vessel, under the name of Meschino, an appellation derived from the unhappy circumstances of his childhood. When he grew up he attracted the notice, and passed into the service, of the



son of the Greek emperor, with whom he acted as Grand Carver. At Constantinople he fell in love with the Princess Elizena, his master's sister. There, too, he distinguished himself by his dexterity in tournaments, and also by his exploits in the course of a war, in which the empire was at that time engaged.

In spite of his love, his merit, and services, Guerin had, on one occasion, been called Turk by the princess Elizena, a term equivalent to slave or villain. To wipe away this reproach he determined on setting out to ascertain who were his parents, as they had hitherto been unknown to him. Concerning this expedition the emperor consulted the court astrologers, who, after due examination of the stars, were unanimously of opinion that Guerin could learn nothing of his parentage, except from the Trees of the sun and moon, which grew at the eastern extremity of the world.

After this explication, Guerin prepared for the trip. Having received from the empress a relic composed of the wood of the true cross, which she affirmed would preserve him from every danger and enchantment, he embarked in a Greek vessel, and landed in little Tartary. Thence he took his route through Asia, and having crossed the Caspian Sea, combated a giant, who seized all travellers he could overtake, especially Christians, and shut them up in his Garde Manger, not only for his own consumption, but to regale the giantess his wife with her four children, who had acquired the family relish for such refreshments. Guerin cut off the whole brood, and thus saved from the spit two prisoners who had been reserved for a *bonne bouche*.

Our hero on his way to India declined the offers made to him by a princess; but the king her father was so much exasperated at this refusal, that he threw him into prison, where he would inevitably have died of hunger, had not the lady he had so recently rejected disinterestedly brought him provisions. This kind procedure had such an effect on the knight, that he broke, in favour of this good princess, an oath of purity he had rashly taken; but as he only swore fidelity to her by Mahomet, he felt no scruple in abandoning her at the end of three months.

Guerin, in the course of his journey through India, saw great variety of monsters, and

heard of dog-headed tribes, and nations with feet so large that they carried them overhead as umbrellas. At length he arrived at the extremity of India, where he found the trees of the sun and moon, who informed him that his name is not Meschino, which he had been hitherto called, but Guerin. He is also told, that he is the son of a king, but that, if he wish farther information, he must take the trouble of visiting the western extremity of the globe.

On his way back, Guerin re-established the princess of Persepolis in her dominions, of which she had been deprived by the Turks. As a mutual attachment arose between her and Guerin, a marriage would have taken place, had it not been for the recent information given by the solar trees. The indulgent princess allowed her lover ten years to discover his parents, and he promised to return at the end of that period.

Guerin next visited Jerusalem, paid his devotions at the holy sepulchre, and thence passed on a pilgrimage to Mount Sinai. From the Holy Land he penetrated into Ethiopia, and arrived at the states of Prester John. This ecclesiastical emperor was at war with a savage people, who had a giant at their head. Guerin assumed the command of Prester's army, and was eminently successful.

In his subsequent progress through Africa, Guerin converted many infidel kings to Christianity, and in one region he possessed himself of the whole country, except the dominions of King Validor. Against this pagan he prepared to take strenuous measures, but his trouble was much abridged by means of the sister of that monarch. This African princess had become enamoured of Guerin, from the account she had received of his beauty, valour, and strength. She therefore sent a messenger to offer him the head and kingdom of her brother, provided he would consent to espouse her; or, at least, conduct himself as her husband. Some of Guerin's retinue received this embassy, and, apprehensive of the over scrupulous conscience of their master, returned in his name a favourable answer. The lady performed her promise in the following manner: she intoxicated her brother, and, as he became very enterprising in consequence, she cut off his head in an



assumed fit of resentment. The gates of the capital were then opened to Guerin; but, when the princess came to demand from him the recompense of her treachery, she was repulsed with the utmost contempt and indignation, being very ugly, and also red-haired, —a singular defect in an African.

After this Guerin having heard that in the mountains of Calabria there lived a sibyl, who had predicted the birth of our Saviour, he resolved to interrogate her concerning his parents. When he arrived in her neighbourhood, he was informed that he had undertaken a very dangerous expedition, since the sibyl, though 1200 years old, still formed designs on the hearts of those who came to consult her, and that it was most perilous to yield to her seductions, but Guerin, who seems to have held in contempt the fascinations of a sibyl 1200 years old, was not deterred from his enterprise. In passing the mountains he met with a hermit, who pointed out to him a hollow in the rocks, which led to her abode. Having reached the end of this cavern, he came to a broad river, which he crossed on the back of a hideous serpent, who was in waiting, and who informed him during the passage, that he had formerly been a gentleman, and had undergone this unpleasant transformation by the charms of the sibyl. Guerin now entered the palace of the prophetess, who appeared surrounded by beautiful attendants, and was as fresh as if she had been 1180 years younger than she was in reality. A splendid supper was served up, and she informed Guerin in the course of the conversation which arose after the repast, that she enjoyed the benefits of long life and unfading beauty, in consequence of having predicted the birth of our Saviour; nevertheless, she confessed that she was not a Christian, but remained firmly attached to Apollo, whose priestess she had been at Delphos, and to whom she was indebted for the gift of prophecy; her last abode had been at Cumae, whence she had retired to the palace which she now inhabited.

Hitherto the conversation of the sibyl had not been such as was expected from her endowments. It had been more retrospective than premonitory; and, however communicative as to her personal history, she had been

extremely reserved on the subject of her guest's. At length, however, she informed him of the names of his parents, and all the circumstances of his birth. She farther promised to acquaint him, on some other occasion, with the place of their residence, and to give him some insight into his future destiny.

At night the sibyl conducted Guerin to the chamber prepared for his repose, and he soon perceived that she was determined to give him considerable disturbance, as she began to ogle him, and then proceeded to the narrowest scrutiny. The wood of the cross, however, which he had received from the Greek empress, and an occasional prayer, procured his present manumission from the sibyl, who was obliged to postpone her designs till the morrow, and thence to defer them for the five following days, owing to the repulsive influence of the same relic.

The prophetess, who seems in her old age to have changed the conduct which procured from Virgil the appellation of *Casta Sibylla*, still refrained from informing her guest of the residence of his parents, in order that, by detaining him in her palace, she might grasp an opportunity of finally accomplishing her intentions. One Saturday she unluckily could not prevent the knight from being witness to an unfortunate and inevitable metamorphose. Fairies, it seems, and those connected with fairies, are on that day invariably converted into hideous animals, and remain in this guise till the ensuing Monday. Guerin, who had hitherto seen the palace inhabited only by fine ladies and gentlemen, was surprised to find himself in the midst of a *menagerie*, and to behold the sibyl herself contorted into a snake. When she had recovered her charms, Guerin upbraided her with the spiral form into which she had been lately wreathed. He now positively demanded his leave, which having obtained, he forthwith repaired to Rome, and though he had extricated himself from the den in the most christian manner, he deemed it necessary to demand the indulgence of the holy father, for having consulted a sibyl who was at once a sorceress, a pagan, and a serpent. The pope imposed on him, as a penance, that he should visit the shrine of St James in Galicia, and afterwards the purgatory of St Patrick in Ireland, at the same



time giving him hopes that in the latter place he might hear intelligence of his parents.

Guerin met with nothing remarkable during the first part of his expiatory pilgrimage. The account, however, of St Patrick's purgatory is full of wonders. When St Patrick went to preach in Ireland, the honest Hibernians refused to believe the articles of his creed, unless they received ocular demonstration of their truth, so that the saint was obliged to set up a purgatory for their satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> On arriving in Ireland, Guerin waited on the archbishop, who, after having vainly attempted to dissuade him from this perilous expedition, gave him letters of introduction to the abbot of the Holy Island, which was the vestibule of purgatory. With the connivance of the abbot, Guerin descended into a well, at the bottom of which he found a subterraneous meadow. There he received instructions from two men clothed in white garments, who lived in an edifice built in form of a church. He was thence carried away by two demons, who escorted him from cavern to cavern, to witness the torments of purgatory. Each cavern, he found, was appropriated for the chastisement of a particular vice. Thus, in one, the *gourmands* were tantalized with the appearance and flavour of dressed dishes, and exquisite beverage, which eluded their grasp; while, at the same time, they were troubled with all the cholics and indigestions to which their intemperance had subjected them during life. This notion of future punishments, appropriate to the darling sins of the guilty, has been common with poets. It occurs in Dante, and we are told in one of Ford's dramas, that

— There are gluttons fed  
With toads and adders: there is burning oil  
Poured down the drunkard's throat; the usurer  
Is forced to sup whole draughts of molten gold;  
There is the murderer for ever stabb'd,  
Yet can he never die.

After Guerin had witnessed the pains of purgatory, he had a display of hell itself, which, in this work, is divided into circles, precisely

<sup>1</sup> One of Calderon's plays turns on the establishment of the purgatory of St Patrick. That saint being shipwrecked in Ireland, conducted the infidel monarch of the country to the mouth of a cavern which led to purgatory. The king threw himself in

on the plan laid out in Dante's *Inferno*. Indeed, the whole of this part of the romance must have been suggested by the unearthly excursions in the *Divina Commedia*. Judas Iscariot, Nero, and Mahomet, act the most distinguished parts in the tragedy now under the eye of Guerin. Among others he recognised his old friend the giant Macus, whom he had slain in Tartary, and whose fate is a warning to all who are guilty of an overgrowth, and who regale their wives and children with the flesh of christian travellers. He also perceived the red-haired African princess, who, for Guerin's sake, had struck off the head of her intoxicated brother. His infernal *Ciceroni* made frequent efforts to add him to the number of the condemned, but were at length reluctantly obliged to give him up to Enoch and Elijah, who pointed out to him Paradise, about as near as Moses saw the Promised Land. These celestial guides, after telling him that he will hear of his parents in Italy, showed him the way back to earth, where he at last arrived, having passed thirty days without sleep or sustenance.

On his return to Rome, Guerin was sent to Albania by the pope, in order to expel the Turks, which, being accomplished, he discovered his father and mother in the dungeon where they had been all along confined. They were speedily re-established on their throne, and the romance concludes with the marriage of Guerin with the princess of Persepolis, to the great mortification of the Grecian princess Elizena, who now heartily repented having rashly denominated him Turk.

Such is the history of Guerin Meschino, who was certainly the most erratic knight of all those who have traversed the world. No one discomfited a greater number of giants and monsters; no one was more constant to his mistress, than he to the princess of Persepolis; no one was so devout, as appears from his conduct in purgatory, and the abode of the sibyl, his numerous pilgrimages and successful conversions.

It cannot fail to have been remarked, in blaspheming, as was his custom, and by an adroit stratagem of the saint, instead of reaching purgatory, he fell headlong into hell. This immediately effected the conversion of his subjects.



tracing the progress of fiction, that, when one species of fabulous writing gave place to another, this happened gradually, and that generally some mixed work was composed, partaking of the mutual qualities of the old and new system. For example, in the romance which we have now been considering, the elements both of the chivalrous and devotional method of writing are blended, but with a greater proportion of the former. In other productions the latter gradually prevailed, till, at length, the traces of the former were almost entirely obliterated: of those works in which spiritual began to gain an ascendancy over romantic fiction,

#### LES AVENTURES DE LYCIDAS ET DE CLEORITHA,

was the earliest and the finest specimen. It was composed in the year 1529, by the Sieur de Basire, archdeacon of Sees, though the author pretends that it was originally written in the Syriac language, and translated by him from a Greek version.

When the island of Rhodes was conquered by the Ottoman emperor, the young women were subjected to slavery, and to still severer misfortunes. One of their number, named Cleoritha, was allotted to the favourite minister of the sultan, and, on account of her beauty, was distinguished by the name of wife, from the crowd of surrounding concubines.

A christian gentleman, named Lycidas, hearing of her misfortunes, and her inviolable attachment to the faith in which she had been brought up, conceived that a visit from him could not fail to be consolatory. By bribing an eunuch, he was introduced into the seraglio, and Cleoritha soon rewarded his attention, by lavishing on him favours which were with difficulty extorted by her mussulman husband.

This intercourse subsisted without detection or interruption for six years; but at the end of that period the mind of Lycidas became a prey to religious melancholy: he poured forth his feelings of contrition before the penitentiary tribunal, but was shocked at the facility with which he obtained absolution for the crimes he acknowledged. Tormented by his

conscience, and disgusted with his confessor, after writing a few lines to Cleoritha, to account for his absence, he departed with the intention of opening his heart to the bishop of Damascus.

On the approach of the night which concluded his first day's journey, Lycidas arrived at a small and solitary inn, by the side of a wood. Having asked the host for an apartment, he found there was no chamber except one, which, for a long period, had been the nightly rendezvous of demons and sorcerers. Lycidas insisted on that room being assigned to him, in spite of the assurance of the landlord, that for seven years past all the travellers who had slept in it, and, among the rest, a pacha, attended by six janissaries, had been disturbed by supernatural agents.

Scarcely had Lycidas entered the haunted apartment, when six damsels, in array of nymphs, appeared, and proposed to him with much apparent civility, that he should accompany them to their mistress. Lycidas at first eyed them with indifference, but at length yielding to the importunities of the fairest, he allowed himself to be conducted to a castle, where he was ushered into a splendid saloon, illumined by a thousand flambeaus. Twenty youths, and as many damsels, of dazzling charms, joined in voluptuous dances, while the most seductive music was poured from the fairest throats. The lady who presided over this festival appeared to be about the age of seventeen, and was of resplendent beauty.

The ball being concluded, the band of dancers and musicians retired, and Lycidas being left alone with the lady, she, mistaking his silence for respect, took an opportunity of encouraging him, by remarking, that the attendants had left her at his mercy. To this observation, and to subsequent overtures still more explicit and enticing, Lycidas maintained the most provoking silence. At length the lady gave vent to her resentment in reproaches, and then vanished from his view. Soon as she disappeared the lights are extinguished, the fabric falls with a tremendous crash into the abysses of the earth, and Lycidas remains alone in the chaos of a dark and tempestuous night.

By the guidance of a pale and uncertain



beam, he regains the solitary abode he had left. There he remains till dawn, when he departs, and arrives, without farther adventures, at the residence of the bishop of Damascus. Lycidas having explained to him the state of his soul, and his conscientious scruples, this prelate prescribes in the first instance the total renunciation of Cleoritha; he recommends that his penitent should then undertake a journey in the habit of a pilgrim, to all the memorable scenes of the Holy Land; that he should thence repair to Venice, to join the army of that republic in its attempts to re-conquer Cyprus, and should conclude with uniting himself to the knights of Jerusalem, in the citadel of Malta.

Lycidas accordingly commences these multifarious ordinances, by despatching a letter to his late mistress, in which he explains his intentions of divorcing himself from her and his vicious passions—urges her to repentance for her manifold transgressions, assures her that he will continue to love her as one loves the apostles, and that he is her obedient servant in God.

Cleoritha feels extremely indignant at this canting epistle, but her passion has yet such influence over her soul, that she escapes from the seraglio to search for Lycidas, in those places where she thinks he is most likely to be found, and pours forth a torrent of abuse on being disappointed in her expectations of overtaking her lover.

Indeed, by this time, Lycidas was on his way to the Holy Land. On his road to Jerusalem he met with the devil and a hermit, who had a trial of strength for the soul of the pilgrim. The devil at first gained some advantage, but the victory remained in the hands of the saint. From Jerusalem Lycidas proceeds to Bethanie, to visit the oratory of the blessed Magdalene. In this place of devotion he feels all the beatitude attached to the progress of a tender repentance; and, remembering the similarity of his own fate to that of the frail, but pardoned sister of Lazarus, he honours her memory with a few tributary verses, such as,

“O beaulx yeux de la Magdaleine,  
Vous etiez lors un Mont Æthna,  
Et vous etes une Fontaine,” &c.

After leaving the Holy Land, Lycidas joins

the Christian army in Cyprus, is appointed colonel of a Slavonian regiment, and receives, while combating at its head, a mortal wound. He does not, however, conceive himself exempted from continuing the activity he had exerted in this world, by his translation to the heavenly mansions. Scarcely has he tasted of celestial repose, when he appears one night to Cleoritha (who by this time had returned to her infidel husband), and exhorts her on the subject of devotion and her various duties. Unfortunately the spirit of religion inspired by this apparition, induces Cleoritha, with a view again to escape from the mussulman, to listen to the proposals of a Jew who had been long enamoured of her charms. By the advice of one of her female slaves, she receives him on the same footing on which Lycidas had been formerly admitted. The criminal intercourse is detected by the husband; he demands the severest justice of his country, and the same pile consumes the Jew, the slave, and Cleoritha.

About the end of the 16th century, a spiritual romance of some celebrity appeared in the Flemish dialect, written by Boetius Bolswert, an engraver, and brother of Scheldt Bolswert, who was still more famous in the same art. This production recounts the pilgrimage of two sisters, whose names are equivalent to Dove and Wilful (in the French translation Colombelle and Volontairette), to Jerusalem, in quest of their Well-beloved. One was, as her name imported, mild and prudent; the other, obstinate and capricious. The contrasted behaviour, and the different issue of the adventures which happen to these two sisters on their journey, form the intrigue of the romance. Thus, they arrive at a village during a fair or festival: Volontairette mingles in a crowd who are following a mountebank; she returns covered with vermin, and her person is depopulated with much trouble. The other sister escapes by remaining at home, engaged in devotional exercises. This romance is mystical throughout: It is invariably insipid, and occasionally blasphemous.

A number of spiritual romances were written by Camus, bishop of Bely,<sup>1</sup> in the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 23.



beginning of the 17th century. At the time when this prelate entered the ecclesiastical state, the taste for romance was so strong as to exclude almost every other species of reading. Hence, he is said to have found it necessary to present his flock with fictions, of which the scope was to impress their minds with sentiments of piety. As he had much zeal, and some imagination, and as his readers had but an indifferent taste, these works may have produced, in his own time, the benefit he expected; but he wanted the art and judgment which alone could have rendered them lastingly popular: his numerous and mystical productions fell into disesteem, in the progress of refinement and learning, and a single specimen will satisfy the reader that they are hardly worth being rescued from the oblivion to which they had been consigned.

Achantes, a gentleman of Burgundy, is represented as the model of every Christian virtue. His wife, Sophronia, whose character is drawn at full length, is an example of piety and conjugal affection. After the lapse of many years, in the course of which this union was blessed with a number of daughters, Achantes passed to a better life. His relict made a vow of perpetual widowhood, which probably no one had any intention of interrupting, and devoted her time to the education of her daughters, especially of the eldest, called Darie, the heroine of the romance. This young lady was afterwards placed under care of Theophilus, an enlightened ecclesiastic; and the first fruit of her tuition was the foundation of a monastery. Her education being completed, she was married; but her husband, soon after the nuptials, went abroad and died. The intelligence of his decease was communicated to his spouse by Theophilus, who embraced that opportunity of expatiating on the various topics of religious consolation. Premature labour, however, was the consequence of the disastrous news, and Darie expired, after having been admitted among the number of the religious of that convent which she had formerly founded and endowed.

Of the works of Camus, however, many are rather moral than spiritual romances; that is to say, some moral precept is meant to be inculcated, independent of acts of devotion, the performance of pilgrimages, or foundation

of monasteries. All of them are loaded with scriptural quotation, sometimes not very aptly applied, all are of a length fatiguing when compared with the interest of the story, and all are disfigured with affected antithesis and cumbrous erudition.

We have already had occasion to mention the Contes Devots, which were coeval with the Fabliaux of the Trouveurs. A collection of stories, partly imitated from spiritual tales, particularly the Pia Hilaria of Angelin Gazée, and partly extracted from larger works of devotion, with some added by the publisher, appeared in modern French in the middle of the seventeenth century. A few examples may be given, as instances of the extreme of superstitious folly, and as specimens of what for a considerable period formed the amusement of the religious communities of France and the Netherlands.

A countryman one day was driving some lambs to slaughter; fortunately for them, St Francis happened to be on the road. As soon as the flock perceived him, they raised most lamentable cries. The saint asked the clown what he was going to do with these animals—"cut their throats," replied he. Good St Francis could not contain himself at this revolting idea, nor resist the sweet supplications of these innocents; he left his mantle with the barbarous peasant, obtained the lambs in exchange, and conducted them to his convent, where he allowed them to live and thrive at their leisure.

Among this little flock there was a sheep which the saint loved tenderly: he was pleased sometimes to speak to her, and instruct her. "My sister," said he, "give thanks to thy Creator according to thy small means. It is good that you enter sometimes into the temple; but be there more humble than when you go into the fold; walk only on tiptoe; bend your knees, give example to little children. But, above all, my dear sister, run not after the rams; wallow not in the mire, but modestly nibble at the grass in our gardens, and be careful not to spoil the flowers with which we deck our altars."

Such were the precepts of St Francis to his sheep. This interesting creature reflected on them in private (*en son particulier*), and practised them so well, that she was the admira-



tion of every one. If a Religious passed by, the beloved sheep of St Francis ran before him, and made a profound reverence. When she heard singing in the church, she came straightway to the altar of the Virgin, and saluted her by a gentle bleat ; when a bell was sounded, which announced the sacred mysteries, she bent her head in token of respect. " O blessed animal ! " exclaims the author, " thou wert not a sheep, but a doctor : thou art a reproach to the worldly ones, who go to church to be admired, and not to worship. I know," continues he, " that the Hugonot will laugh, and say this is a grandmother's tale ; but, say what he will, heresy will be dispelled, faith will prevail, and the sheep of St Francis be praised for evermore."

On another occasion, St Francis contracted with a wolf, that the city would provide for him, if he would not raven as heretofore. To this condition he readily assented, and this amiable quadruped farther gratified St Francis by an assiduous personal attendance. Many saints have taken pleasure in associating with different animals, and St Anthony, we are somewhere told, made the pig his gossip ; but this brotherhood with wolves seems peculiar to St Francis.

The Abbé de Corbie had the laudable custom of tenderly rearing a number of crows, in honour of his name. One of these birds was full of tricks and malice. Sometimes he pecked the toes of the novices, sometimes he pinched the tails of the cats, at other times he flew away with the dinner of his comrades, and obliged them to fast like the good fathers ; but his highest delight was to pluck the finest feathers from the peacocks, when they displayed their plumage.

One day the Abbé de Corbie having entered the refectory, took off his ring to wash his hands : our crow darts on it adroitly, and flies off unobserved. When the Abbé goes to put on his ring, it is not to be found ; being unable to learn what has become of it, he hurls an excommunication against the unknown author of the theft. Soon the crow becomes plaintive and sad—he does nothing but pine and drag a languishing life—his feathers drop with the lightest breeze—his wings flag—his body becomes dry and emaciated—no more plucking of peacocks' feathers,

no more pinching of novices' toes. His condition now inspires compassion in those he had most tormented, and the commiseration even of the peacocks is excited. With a view of ascertaining the cause of his malady, his nest is visited, to see if he has gathered any poisonous plant. What is the astonishment of all, when the ring which the Abbé had lost, and now forgotten, is here discovered ! As there is no longer a thief to punish, the anathema is recalled, and the crow resumes in a few days his gaiety and *embonpoint*.

Such were the tales invented and propagated by the monks, partly with pious, and partly with politic designs, which they imposed on the multitude as genuine history, and which were received with eager curiosity and devout credulity.

Some of these stories, absurd as they are, have served as the basis of French and English dramas : Les Fils Ingrats of Piron, coincides with one of these spiritual fictions. Another tale which occurs in the Pia Hilaria, is that of a drunk beggar, who is carried by the Duke of Burgundy to his palace, where he enjoys for twenty-four hours the pleasures of command. This story is told of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, in Goulart's *Histoires Admirables*, whence it was translated in one of Grimstone's " *Admirable and Memorable Histories*," which Malone considers the origin of the Induction to the *Taming of the Shrew*. The first notion, however, of such an incident was no doubt derived from the East. In the tale of the Sleeper Awakened, in the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, the Caliph Haroun Alraschid gives a poor man, called Abon Hassan, a soporific powder, and has him conveyed, while under its influence, to the palace, where, when he awakes, he is obeyed and entertained as the Commander of the Faithful, till, another powder being administered, he is carried back on the following night to his humble dwelling.

Of the various spiritual romances which have appeared in different countries, no one has been so deservedly popular as the

#### PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

of John Bunyan, an allegorical work, in which the author describes the journey of a Christian from the city of Destruction to the



heavenly Jerusalem. The origin of the Pilgrim's Progress has been attributed by some to Barnard's Religious Allegory, entitled *The Isle of Man, or Proceedings in Manshire*, published in 1627, while others have traced it to the story of the Wandering Knight, translated from French by Wm. Goodyear, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, *Le Pelerinage de l'Ame*, by Ant. Girard, printed at Paris in 1480, and subsequently translated by Caxton, relates, in manner of a dream, the progress of the soul after its departure from the body, till led up to the heavenly mansions. There is also an old French work, which was written by a monk of Calais, and was versified in English as far back as 1426, relating to a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and containing various dialogues between the Pilgrim's Grace-Dieu, Sapience, &c. The existence of such works can detract little from the praise of originality; but, if the notion of a journey through the perils and temptations of life, to a place of religious rest, has been borrowed by the author of the Pilgrim's Progress, it was most probably suggested by a Flemish work already mentioned, which describes the pilgrimage of Colombelle to Jerusalem.

The Pilgrim's Progress was written while the author was in prison, where he lay from 1660 to 1672: so that the date of its composition must be fixed between those two periods. This celebrated allegory is introduced in a manner which, in its mysterious solemnity, bears a striking resemblance to the commencement of the Vision of Dante:—"As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept I dreamed a dream—I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed with rags, with a book in his hand. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein, and as he read he wept and trembled," &c. The author then describes the awakening spiritual fears of his hero, Christian—his resolution to depart from the city of Destruction, suggested perhaps by the flight of Lot from the devoted cities of the plain—his ineffectual attempts to induce his wife and family and neighbours to accompany him—his departure, and all the incidents, whether of a discouraging or comforting nature, which he encountered on his journey.

It was, perhaps, ill-judged in the author to represent Christian as having a wife and family, since, whatever be the spiritual lesson intended to be conveyed by his leaving them, one cannot help being impressed with a certain notion of selfishness and hard-heartedness in the hero. "Now he had not run far from his own house," says the author, "but his wife and children perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers into his ears, and ran on, crying, 'Life! Life! Eternal Life!' So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain." This does not impress us with a very favourable idea of the disposition of the hero, and, in fact, with the exception of Faith and Perseverance, he is a mere negative character, without one good quality to recommend him. There is little or no display of charity, beneficence, or even benevolence, during the whole course of the pilgrimage. The sentiments of Christian are narrow and illiberal, and his struggles and exertions wholly selfish.

The author, however, composed his work agreeably to the notion of christianity existing in his time, and accordingly this must be kept in view while forming our judgment of its merit. It discovers a rich and happy invention, the incidents and characters are well portrayed, and there is much skill in the dramatic adaptation of dialogue to the characters introduced. But as the author was illiterate, his taste is coarse and inelegant, and he generally injures the beauty of his pictures by some unlucky stroke. The occasional poetry introduced is execrable.

In one point of view, however, this want of learning and taste is favourable to the general effect of the work. It gives to the whole an appearance of simplicity and truth, which is also aided by the author, like Homer, abridging nothing, but again and again repeating dialogues as they were delivered, and incidents as they occurred. The only art which he possesses, and it has an agreeable effect, is the art of contrast. Thus, for example, the beautiful palace, where he is entertained by the four virgins, Watchful, Prudence, Piety, and Charity, is succeeded by his distressful combat with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation, and the confinement in the dungeon of giant



Despair is immediately followed by the pleasing picture of the Delectable Mountains.

By the introduction of two other pilgrims in different parts of the journey of Christian, the first of whom, Faithful, dies a martyr, and the second, Hopeful, after the death of the former, accompanies Christian to the end of his pilgrimage, the author not only agreeably diversifies his work, but, by their history and conversation, has an opportunity of expounding his whole system of Faith, and of exhibiting the different means by which the same great object is attained. On the whole, according to the author's views of christianity, the work is admirably conceived; and the difficulties of his task are a sufficient excuse for those incongruities which, it must be confessed, occasionally occur. For example, one is somewhat surprised at the wickedness of different characters who present themselves to Christian after the journey is almost terminated, and who, according to the leading idea of the work, that christianity is a pilgrimage, could hardly have been expected to have advanced so far in their progress.

It is difficult to give any specimen of this popular allegory, as its merit consists less in the beauty of detached passages, than in almost irresistibly carrying on the reader to that goal which is the object of pursuit. The following description, however, is short, and gives a favourable idea of the author's powers of picturesque delineation:—"In this light, therefore, he came to the end of the valley. Now I saw in my dream, that at the end of this valley lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of pilgrims that had gone this way formerly; and, while I was musing what should be the reason, I espied a little before me a cave, where two giants, Pope and Pagan, dwelt in old time, by whose power and tyranny the men, whose bones, blood, ashes, &c., lay there, were cruelly put to death. But by this place Christian went without much danger, whereat I somewhat wondered: But I have learned since, that Pagan has been dead many a day, and as for the other, though he be alive, he is, by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at

pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them. So I saw that Christian went on his way; yet at the sight of the old man that sat at the mouth of the cave, he could not tell what to think, especially because he spake to him, though he could not go after him, saying, 'You will never mend till more of you be burnt.' But he held his peace, and set a good face on it, and went by, and caught no hurt."

Of the powerful painting in the volume, no part is superior to the description of the passage of Christian through the River of Death. The representation also of the arrival of Christian and his fellow pilgrim at the heavenly Jerusalem is very pleasing, though intermingled with traits which a good taste would have rejected. It concludes in the following manner:—

"Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the gate; and, lo! as they entered, they were transfigured, and they had raiment put on that shone like gold.

"There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave to them the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, 'Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.' I also heard the men themselves sing with a loud voice, saying, 'Blessing, honour, glory, and power, be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb, for ever and ever.'

"Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men with crowns upon their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal.

"There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.' And after that, they shut up the gates; which, when I had seen, I wished myself amongst them."

The emblematic representation of heavenly joys under figure of a magnificent city, so frequent in spiritual romance, probably originated in a scriptural similitude, which was readily adopted by the monks and anchorites



of the early ages. It was natural enough for men who were clad in hair-cloth, and who dwelt in solitary caverns or gloomy cells, to imagine that supreme bliss consisted in walking in parade, attired with glittering garments, through streets which shone like gold : But

though this occupation may be better than quaffing Hydromel in Valhalla, to us it is scarcely so attractive as the Arabian Paradise, or the *Loca læta et amœna vireta* of a Platonic Elysium.

## CHAPTER X.

Comic Romance—Works of Rabelais—Vita di Bertoldo—Don Quixote—Gusman d' Alfarache—Marcos de Obregon—Roman Comique, &c.—Political Romance—Utopia—Argenis—Sethos, &c.

ALL men have, more or less, a propensity to satire and ridicule. This tendency has its origin in self-love, which naturally leads us to indulge in a belief of our own superiority over the rest of our species. It is in satire and ridicule that this feeling receives its most frequent gratification ; and, spite of the objections of Beattie, nothing can, in many instances, be more just than the reflection of Addison on the well-known theory of Hobbes, that when a man laughs he is not very merry, but very proud.

But, besides the gratification they afford, works of satire and ridicule are useful, as they frequently exhibit mankind in their true light and just proportions, with all their passions and follies. They remove from their conduct that varnish with which men so ingeniously cover those actions which are frequently the offspring of pride, private views, or voluntary self-delusion.

In nothing is the superiority of the moderns over the ancients more apparent than in the higher excellence of their ludicrous compositions. Modern ridicule, as has been shown by Dr Beattie, is at once more copious, and more refined, than the ancient. Many sources of wit and humour, formerly unknown, are now open and obvious, and those which are common to all ages have been purified by improvement in courtesy and taste.

### RABELAIS,

whom Sir William Temple has styled the

Father of Ridicule, is certainly the first modern author who obtained much celebrity by the comic or satirical romance. At the time when he appeared, extravagant tales were in the height of their popularity. As he had determined to ridicule the most distinguished persons, and everything that the rest of mankind regarded as venerable or important, he clothed his satire somewhat in the form of the lying stories of the age, that under this veil he might be sheltered from the resentment of those whom he intended to deride. By this means he probably conceived that his work would, at the same time, obtain a favourable reception from the vulgar, who, though they should not discover his secret meaning, might be entertained with fantastic stories which bore some resemblance to those to which they were accustomed.

With this view, Rabelais availed himself of the writings of those who had preceded him in satirical romance, and imitated in particular the True History of Lucian. His stories he borrowed chiefly from previous facetiae and novellettes : Thus the story of Hans Carvel's ring, of which Fontaine believed him the inventor, is one of the Facetiae of Poggio, and entitled Annulus, or Visio Francisci Philelphi. With an intention of adding to the diversion of the reader, he has given a mixture of burlesque and barbarous words from the Greek and Latin, a notion which was perhaps suggested by the Liber Macaronicorum of Teofilo Folengi, published under the name of Merlinus Coccaius, about twenty years before the



appearance of the work of Rabelais. An infinite number of puns and quibbles have also been introduced amongst the more ingenious conceptions of the author. In short, his romance may be considered as a mixture, or olio, of all the merry, satirical, and comic modes of writing that had been employed previous to the age in which he wrote.

There are four things which Rabelais seems principally to have proposed to ridicule in his work : 1. The refined and crooked politics of the period in which he lived. 2. The vices of the clergy, the Romish superstitions, and the religious controversies at that time agitated. 3. The lying and extravagant tales then in vogue. 4. The pedantry and philosophical jargon of the age.

But although it be understood that these in general were the objects of the author, the application of a great part of the satire is unknown. Works of wit and humour, unless they allude to permanent follies, in which case their relish may remain unimpaired, are more subject to the ravages of time, and more liable to become obscure, than any other literary compositions, because the propriety of allusion cannot be estimated when the customs and incidents referred to are forgotten : We must be acquainted with the likeness before we can relish the caricature. "Those modifications of life," says Dr Johnson, "and peculiarities of practice, which are the progeny of error and perverseness, or at best of some accidental influence, or transient impression, must perish with their parents." To us who are unacquainted with the follies and impieties of the Greek sophists, nothing can appear more wretched than the ridicule with which these pretended philosophers were persecuted by Aristophanes ; yet it is said to have acted with wonderful effect among a people distinguished for wit and refinement of taste. The humour, which in *Hudibras* transported the age which gave it birth with merriment, is lost, in a great degree, to a posterity unaccustomed to puritanical moroseness.

No satirical writings have suffered more by lapse of time than those of Rabelais ; for, besides being in a great measure confined to temporary and local subjects, he was obliged to write with ambiguity, on account of the

delicate matters of which he treated, the arbitrary and persecuting spirit of the age and country in which he lived, and the multitude of enemies by whom he was surrounded. Accordingly, even to those who are most minutely acquainted with the political transactions and ecclesiastical history of the sixteenth century, there will be many things from which no meaning can be deciphered, and to most readers the works of Rabelais must appear a mass of unintelligible extravagance. The advantages which he formerly derived from temporary opinions, personal allusions, and local customs, have long been lost, and every topic of merriment which the modes of artificial life afforded, now only "obscure the page which they once illumined." Even the outline of the story, with which Rabelais has chosen to surround his satire, has furnished matter of dispute, and commentators are not agreed what persons are intended by the two chief characters, Gargantua and Pantagruel. Thus it has been said by some writers, that Gargantua is Francis I., and Pantagruel Henry II., while, in fact, there is not one circumstance in the lives, nor one feature in the characters of these French princes, which appears to correspond with the actions or dispositions of the imaginary heroes of Rabelais.

Other critics have supposed that Grangousier, the father of Gargantua, is John D'Albret, King of Navarre ; Gargantua, Henry D'Albret, son and successor of John ; Pantagruel, Anthony Bourbon, Duke of Vendosme, who was father to Henry IV., and by his marriage with Jean D'Albret, the daughter of Henry D'Albret, succeeded his father-in-law in the throne of Navarre. Picrohole, according to this explication, is King of Spain, either Ferdinand of Arragon, or Charles V. Panurge, the companion of Pantagruel, who is the secondary hero of the work, is said to be John de Montluc, bishop of Valence, who, like Panurge, was well versed in ancient and modern languages ; like him, penetrating and deceitful ; like him, professed the popish religion, while he despised its superstitions, and owed, like Panurge, his elevation to the family of Navarre. That want of accordance, which exists in many particulars between the real characters and the delineations of Rabelais, and which is the great cause of the intricacy of the subject,



arises from individuals in the work being made to represent two or more persons, whose aggregate qualities and adventures are thus concentrated in one. On the other hand, the author often subdivides an integral history, so that the same individual is represented under different names. Nor does he confine himself to the order of chronology, but frequently joins together events which followed each other at long intervals.

Holding this in view, it will be found that the commentators who have adopted the above-mentioned key, explain more successfully than could have been expected, the meaning and tendency of the five books of Rabelais.

The first is occupied chiefly with the life of Gargantua. An absurd and disgusting carousal of his father Grangousier ridicules the debaucheries of John D'Albret, which often consisted in going privately to eat and drink immoderately at the houses of his meanest subjects. The account of the manner in which Gargantua, or Henry D'Albret, was brought up, corresponds with the mode in which we are informed by historians the young princes of Navarre passed their childhood, especially Henry IV., whom his grandfather inured in his tender age to all sorts of hardship. After sometime Gargantua is sent to Paris, and put under the tuition of a pedant called Holofernes, whence Shakspeare has probably taken the name of his pedantic character in *Love's Labour's Lost*. The education of Gargantua is a satire on the tedious and scholastic mode of instruction which was then in use, and is, at the same time, expressive of the little improvement derived by Henry D'Albret from popish tuition, while the progress Gargantua afterwards made in every science under the care of Ponocrates, points out the benefit derived by the Prince of Navarre from his protestant teachers, to whose religion he was ardently, though secretly, attached. Gargantua, called from Paris to defend his own country, which had been invaded by the Truans, alludes to the wars between the house of D'Albret and the Spaniards—*truand* signifying idle or lazy, which the French imagined to be the character of that people.

Book second commences with a detail of

the pedigree of Pantagruel, which the author deduces from the giants, a satire on the family pride of some of the princes of Navarre. Next follow the wonderful feats he performed in his childhood, and then his youthful expedition to Paris. In this excursion he meets with a Limousin, who addresses him in a pedantic and unintelligible jargon, by which Rabelais mocks the writers of the age, who stuffed their compositions with Latin terms, to which they gave a French inflection. Pantagruel arrives at Paris, and enters on his studies. The catalogue of the books in St Victor's library, the names of which are partly real and partly fictitious, is meant as a sarcasm on those who form a collection of absurd works. Pantagruel makes such proficiency in his studies, that he is appointed umpire in an important cause, in which the incoherent nonsense of the pleadings of the parties, and Pantagruel's unintelligible decision, are a satire on the judicial proceedings of the age, particularly those that took place in the trial concerning the domains possessed by the Constable of Bourbon, and which were claimed by Louisa of Savoy, mother of Francis I. During his stay at Paris, Pantagruel meets with Panurge, who continues to be a leading character through the remainder of the work, and attends Pantagruel in his expedition against the Dipsodes, who had laid waste a great part of his territory. The Dipsodes are the Flemings, and other subjects of Charles V., who invaded Picardy and the adjacent districts, of which Anthony of Bourbon was governor; and the real issue of that war is enigmatically pointed out towards the end of the second book, by the discomfiture of the 300 giants.

Panurge is the principal character through the whole of the third book. His mind is represented as fluctuating between the desire of entering into a matrimonial engagement and the fear of repenting his choice. To dispel his doubts he consults certain persons, who, by magical skill, could relieve mental anxiety by prediction of the future: in particular, he applies to Raminogrobis, an aged poet, then in the last moments of his existence, who is intended for Cretin, an author almost as much celebrated in his own day as he has been neglected by posterity. The last person of whom



he asks advice puts into his hands an empty bottle, which Panurge interprets to imply that he should undertake a voyage for the purpose of obtaining a response from the oracle of the Holy Bottle.

The fourth and fifth books are occupied with the expedition of Panurge, accompanied by Pantagruel, in quest of the oracle. This voyage is said to signify a departure from the World of Error to search after Truth, which the author places in a bottle, in consequence of the proverbial effects of intoxication. These two books are considered as the most entertaining part of the work, as the satire is more general and obvious than in those by which they are preceded.

In the account of this voyage, the author, according to the expression of Thuanus, *omnes hominum ordines deridendos propinavit*. Each island, which his characters pass, or on which they disembark, is made the vehicle of new ridicule. Thus, the first place touched at is the island of Medamothi (No where), and in the account of the rarities with which this country abounds, the improbable fictions of travellers are ridiculed. In another island the author paints the manners of bailiffs and other inferior officers of justice. Leaving this archipelago of absurdity, the vessel of Panurge and Pantagruel is nearly wrecked in a storm, which typifies the persecution raised in France against the Hugonots; and the land where the ship went into port after the tempest, is the British dominions, which formed a safe harbour from the violence of popish persecution. Here the ruins of obelisks and temples, and vestiges of ancient monuments, denote the abolition of the monasteries which had recently been effected. The last place at which Pantagruel and Panurge arrive is Lantern-land, or the Land of Learning, inhabited by professors of various arts and sciences. Our voyagers beseech the queen of this country to grant them a lantern to light and conduct them to the oracle of the Holy Bottle. Their request being complied with, they are guided by the lantern, that is, the light of learning, to the spot which they so vehemently desired to reach. On arriving in the country where the oracle was situated, they, in the first place, pass through an extensive vineyard. At the end of this vineyard, being still pre-

ceded by the lantern, they come through a vault, to the porch of a magnificent temple. The architecture of this building is splendidly described, and mysteries have, of course, been discovered by commentators in the account of the component parts. Its gates spontaneously open, after which the perspicuous lantern takes leave, and consigns the strangers to the care of Bacbuc, priestess of the temple. Under her escort they view a beautiful representation of the triumphs of Bacchus, the splendid lamp by which the temple is illuminated, and the miraculous fountain of water, which had the taste of wine. Finally, Panurge is conducted through a golden gate to a round chapel formed of transparent stones, in the middle of which stood a heptagonal fountain of alabaster, containing the oracular bottle, which is described as being of fine crystal, and of an oval shape. The priestess throws something into the fount, on which the water begins to bubble, and the word *Trinc* is heard to proceed from the bottle, which the priestess declares to be the most auspicious response pronounced while she had officiated at the oracle. This term she explains to be equivalent to Drink, and as the goddess had directed her votary to the divine liquor, she presents him with Falernian wine in a goblet. The priestess having also partaken with her guests, raves and prophesies, and all being inspired with Bacchanalian enthusiasm, the romance concludes with a *tirade* of obscene and impious verses.

Few writers have been more reviled and extolled than Rabelais; he has been highly applauded by De Thou, but bitterly attacked by the poet Ronsard, and also by Calvin, who thought to have made a convert of him. Subsequent critics are equally at variance: Boileau has called him *La Raison habillée en Masque*, while Voltaire, in his *Temple de Gout*, pronounces, that all the sense and wit of Rabelais may be comprised in three pages, and that the rest of the work is a mass of incoherent absurdity.

We are informed by Pasquier, in his *Letters* (l. 1.) that Rabelais had two unsuccessful imitators.—One under the name of Leon L'Adulfy, in his *Propos Rustiques*, and the other, anonymous, in a work entitled *Les Fanfreluches. Le Moyen de Parvenir*, by



Beroalde de Verville, is the work which bears, I think, the closest resemblance to that of Rabelais. The author professes himself an imitator of the father of comic romance, but the disorder that pervades his work is greater than in the romance of his predecessor. Like Athenæus, he introduces a company conversing together at random on various topics, and a number of jests and tales in the manner of Rabelais are thus thrown together at hazard, but there is no leading character or story by which they are in any way connected. We are told in the *Menagiana* that the best of these tales may be found, in form of question and answer, at the end of a MS. in the old language of Picardy, entitled *Les Evangiles des Quenouilles*, and which is different from the printed edition of that production.

In chronological order, the next comic romance, subsequent to the work of Rabelais, is the

#### VITA DI BERTOLDO,

written in Italian towards the end of the 16th century by Julio Cesare Croce, surnamed *Della Lyra*, because he dignified with this appellation the violin on which he scraped in the streets of Bologna.

I know of scarcely any celebrated novel or romance which exhibits the rise of the principal character from a low rank to a distinguished fortune by the force of talents. The *Life of Bertoldo*, however, describes the elevation of a peasant to the highest situation in his country, by a species of grotesque humour, and a singular ingenuity in extricating himself from the difficulties into which he is thrown by the malice of his enemies.

This romance is borrowed from the eastern story of Solomon and Marcolphus, which is one of the many oriental traditions concerning the Jewish monarch. It appeared in a metrical form in the French language in the 13th century; in Latin in the year 1488; and in English under the title of *Sayings and Proverbs of Solomon*, with the answers of Marcolphus. The *Life of Bertoldo*, however, which is the Italian form of this fiction, is the most popular shape it has assumed. Indeed, in the country in which it appeared, it enjoyed, for more than two centuries, reputation equal to that of Robinson

Crusoe, or the *Pilgrim's Progress*, in this island: the children had it by heart, and the nurses related it to those who had not yet learned to read. Innumerable sayings or proverbs derived from it are still in the mouths of the few who have never perused or forgotten it, as *la pace di Marcolfa*, the wife of the hero, who habitually quarrelled with her husband for the sake of the reconciliation.

We are told, near the beginning of this work, that in the 6th century King Alboino reigned over Lombardy in his capital of Verona. At the same time there lived, in a small village in the neighbourhood, a peasant called Bertoldo, of a strange and ludicrous aspect. His large head was round as a football, and garnished with short red hair; he had two little bleary eyes, fringed with scarlet; a flat broad nose; a mouth from ear to ear, and a person corresponding to the charms of his countenance.

But the deformity of Bertoldo's appearance was compensated by the acuteness and solidity of his understanding. His neighbours preferred his moral instructions to those of their pastor; he adjusted their differences more to their satisfaction, than the lord of the territory or the judge, and he made them laugh more heartily than the mountebanks, who occasionally passed through the village.

One day Bertoldo took a longing to see the court and capital. On entering Verona, he observed two women disputing on the street, about the property of a mirror, and followed them to the hall of audience, whither they were summoned to receive the judgment of the king, who had overheard their quarrel. The singularity of Bertoldo's figure, and his presumption in choosing a seat reserved for the chief courtiers, attracted the monarch's attention, whose curiosity was farther excited by the singular answers he returned to the first questions concerning his situation in life, his age, and residence. His majesty, in consequence, persisted in a series of interrogatories; he asked which is the best wine? "That which we drink at the expense of another." "Who carresses us most?" "He who has already deceived us, or intends to do so,"—an idea that has been expressed by Ariosto:—

Chi mi fa piu carezze che non suole,  
O m' ingannato o ingannar mi vuole.



Bertoldo now listened to the pleadings in the cause concerning the mirror. The king ordered it to be broken in two, and divided between the disputants. She of the parties who opposed this arrangement, and prayed that it might be given entire to her adversary, had the whole bestowed on her. The courtiers applauded this happy application of the judgment of Solomon; but Bertoldo pointed out those specialties of the case, from which he conceived that that decision ought not to be held as a precedent, and concluded with some satirical reflections on the fair sex, to which the king replied in a studied eulogy. These sarcasms, and a device by no means ingenious, to which he had recourse, in order to convince the king that his majesty entertained too favourable an opinion, induced the queen to avenge the injury offered to those of her sex. On pretence of rewarding Bertoldo, she sent for him to her apartments. "What a ridiculous figure you are," remarked her majesty: "Such as it is," replied Bertoldo, "I have it from nature—I neither mend my shape nor counterfeit a complexion." Perceiving that the queen, and the ladies who attended her, were provided with switches, and thence suspecting their hostile intentions, he informed them, that, being somewhat of a sorcerer, he was not only aware of their designs, but foresaw that she would give the first blow, who had least regard to her own and her husband's honour. Bertoldo escaped unhurt by this device, which is similar to that in the 39th of the *Cento Novelle Antiche* (see p. 205).

The drollery of Bertoldo excited the jealousy of Fagotti, who had been long the unrivalled buffoon of the court. The author relates a number of absurd questions, which Fagotti put with the view of exposing his enemy, and the triumphant answers of our hero.—"How would you carry water in a sieve?" "I would wait till it was frozen." "When could you catch a hare without running?" "When it is on the spit." These, and many other repartees of Bertoldo, correspond with stories told of Bahalul, surnamed Al Megnun, the court fool of Haroun Alraschid (D'Herbelot, *Bib. Orient. Bahalul*).

About this time Bertoldo's old foes, the court ladies, insisted on admission into the

councils of state. His majesty was somewhat embarrassed by the application, till, by advice of Bertoldo, he appeared to acquiesce in the demand, and sent a box to the wife of the prime minister, desiring her to keep it in the garden till next day, when the ladies and ministers were to deliberate on its contents. The minister's wife opened it from curiosity, and the bird which was enclosed flew off. She thus demonstrated how ill qualified the fair sex were to be intrusted with secrets of state.

The ladies resolved to be avenged on Bertoldo for the disappointment they had sustained by his means. He was a second time summoned to the queen's apartments, but, before proceeding thither, he put two live hares in his pocket. On his way it was necessary to cross a court, which was guarded by two monstrous dogs, purposely unchained. Bertoldo occupied their attention by setting loose the two hares, and, while the dogs were engaged in the chase, he arrived safe in the apartments of the queen, to the utter mortification of her majesty and her attendants.

Perceiving that Bertoldo eluded all stratagem, the queen insisted that he should be hanged without farther ceremony, to which the king readily consented. Our hero acceded to this proposal with less reluctance than could have been expected, but stipulated that he should be allowed to choose the tree on which he was to expiate his offences. He was accordingly sent forth, escorted by the officers of justice and the executioner, in order to make his election, but cavilled at every tree which was recommended to his notice,—an incident which occurs in the original Solomon and Marcolphus. During this search Bertoldo made himself so agreeable to the guards, by his pleasant stories, that they allowed him to escape, and he returned to his native village.

Her majesty afterwards repented of her cruelty, and, on being informed that Bertoldo was still alive, she requested that he might be recalled to court. With a good deal of difficulty he was persuaded to return, and was made a privy counsellor. Owing, however, to the change in his mode of life, he did not long survive his elevation.

I have given this abstract of the Life of



Bertoldo, not on account of its merit, but celebrity; and, because it formed for two hundred years the chief literary amusement of one of the most interesting countries in Europe. It is unnecessary, however, to enlarge on the life of the son Bertoldino, written by the author of Bertoldo, but added a long while after his first composition, or on that of the grandson Cacasenno, by Camillo Scaliger della Fratta. These works never attained the same popularity as their original, and are inferior to it in point of merit. The same king who had patronized Bertoldo, believing that talents were hereditary, brought the son to court, where he became as noted for folly and absurdity, as his father had been for shrewdness, and was speedily sent back in disgrace to his village. His majesty, not satisfied with one experiment, sent for the grandson, who proved a glutton and poltroon, and the incidents of the history hinge on the exhibition of his bad qualities.

The lives of these three peasants form the subject of a much-esteemed Italian poem, which was written in the end of the 17th, or commencement of the 18th century, under the following circumstances. Joseph Maria Crespi, a celebrated artist of Bologna, executed a series of paintings, illustrative of the adventures of Bertoldo and his descendants, in which the figures of the principal characters were delineated with infinite spirit. From his pictures a set of engravings was taken by a Bolognese artist, and, instead of publishing a new edition of the prose romance, in which these might have been introduced, several wits of Italy conceived the notion of making Bertoldo and his family the heroes of a poem, in what the Italians call the *Genere Bernesche*, from Berni its inventor, which is somewhat of a higher tone than the French burlesque, but lower than our satire. This composition was divided into twenty cantos: Each member of the association wrote a canto, except three of the number; one of whom gave arguments in verse, another furnished an allegory, and the last appended learned annotations. The work was printed at Bologna in 1736, with all the decorations which accompany the finest Italian poems, and had soon a wonderful success. It was translated into the Bolognese and Venetian dialects, and a voca-

bulary of each of these jargons was appended to the editions 1746 and 1747. It has also been versified in modern Greek.

By far the most celebrated romance of the class with which we are at present engaged, is the *Life and Exploits of*

### DON QUIXOTE,

which first appeared in the beginning of the 17th century, a few years posterior to the composition of the *Life of Bertoldo*.

At a time when the spirit of practical knight errantry was extinguished, but the rage for the perusal of relations of chivalrous extravagance continued unabated, Cervantes undertook to ridicule the vitiated taste of his countrymen, and particularly, it is said, of the Duke of Lerma, whose head was intoxicated with the fictions of romance. His work accordingly is not intended, as some have imagined, to expose the quest of adventures, the eagerness for which had ceased not only at the time in which Cervantes wrote, but in which Don Quixote is feigned to have existed. Indeed, if this had not been supposed, the merit of the work would be diminished, as a considerable portion of the ridicule arises from the singularity of the hero's undertaking. Don Quixote, therefore, was written with the intention of deriding the folly of those, whose time, to the neglect of other studies and employments, was engrossed with the fabrication or perusal of romantic compositions. The author indeed informs us in his prologue, that his object was, "*deribar la maquina mal fundada de los libros caballerescos, y deshacer la autoridad y cabida que tenian en el mundo y en el vulgo.*"

With this view the Spanish author, as all the world knows, has represented a man of amiable disposition, and otherwise of sound understanding, whose brain had become disordered by the constant and indiscriminate perusal of romances of chivalry; a fiction by no means improbable, as this is said to be frequently the fate of his countrymen towards the close of their days:—"Sur la fin de ses jours Mendoza devint furieux, comme font d'ordinaire les Espagnols," (*Thuana*, &c.) The imagination of Don Quixote was at length so bewildered with notions of enchantments



and single combats, that he received as truth the whole system of chimeras of which he read, and fancied himself called on to roam through the world in quest of adventures with his horse and arms, both for the general good, and the advancement of his own reputation. In the course of his errantry, which is laid in La Mancha and Arragon, the most familiar objects and occurrences appear to his distempered imagination clothed in the veil of magic and chivalry, and formed with those romantic proportions to which he was accustomed in his favourite compositions; and if at any time what he had thus transformed, flash on his understanding in its true and natural colours, he imagines this real appearance all delusion, and a change accomplished by malevolent enchanters, who were envious of his fame, and wished to deprive him of the glory of his adventures.

These two principles of belief form the basis of the work, and, by their influence, the hero is conducted through a long series of comical and fantastic incidents, without entertaining the remotest suspicion of the wisdom or propriety of his undertaking. In all his adventures he is accompanied by a squire, in whom the mixture of credulity and acuteness forms, in the opinion of many, the most amusing part of the composition: indeed, if laughter, as has been said by some persons, arise from the view of things incongruous united in the same assemblage, nothing can be more happy than the striking and multifarious contrasts exhibited between Sancho and his master. The presence of the squire being essential to the work, his attendance on the knight is secured by the promise of the government of an island, and the good luck of actually finding some pieces of gold on the Sierra Morena. At length, one of Don Quixote's friends, with the intention of forcing him to return to his own village, assumes the disguise of a knight, attacks and overthrows him; and, according to the conditions of the rencontre, insists on his retiring to his home, and abstaining for a twelvemonth from any chivalrous exploit. This period Don Quixote resolves to pass as a shepherd, and lays down an absurd plan of rural existence, which, though written by the author of *Galatea*, is certainly meant as a satire on pastoral

compositions, which, in the time of Cervantes, began to divide the palm of popularity with romances of chivalry.

In the work of Cervantes there is great novelty of plan, and a species of gratification is presented to the reader, which is not afforded in any previous composition. We feel infinite pleasure in first beholding the objects as they are in reality, and afterwards as they are metamorphosed by the imagination of the hero. From the nature of the plan, however, the author was somewhat circumscribed in the number of his principal characters; but, as Milton has contrived to double his *dramatis personæ*, by representing our first parents in a state of perfect innocence, and afterwards of sin and disgrace, Cervantes has in like manner assigned a double character to Don Quixote, who is a man of good sense and information, but irrational on subjects of chivalry. Sancho, too, imbibes a different disposition when under the influence of his master's frenzy, from that given him by nature. The other characters who intervene in the action are represented under two appearances—that which they possess in reality, and that which they assume in Don Quixote's imagination.

The great excellence, however, of the work of Cervantes, lies in the readiness with which the hero conceives, and the gravity with which he maintains, the most absurd and fantastic ideas, but which always bear some analogy to the adventures in romances of chivalry. In order to place particular incidents of these fables in a ludicrous point of view, they were most carefully perused and studied by Cervantes. The Spanish romances, however, seem chiefly to have engaged his attention, and *Amadis de Gaul* appears to have been used as his text. Indeed, there are so many allusions to romances of chivalry, and so much of the amusement arises from the happy imitation of these works, and the ridiculous point of view in which the incidents that compose them are placed, that I cannot help attributing some affectation to those, who, unacquainted with this species of writing, pretend to possess a lively relish for the adventures of Don Quixote. It is not to be doubted, however, that a considerable portion of the pleasure which we feel in the perusal of Don Quixote, is derived from the delineation



tion of the scenery with which it abounds—the magnificent sierras—romantic streams and delightful vallies of a land which seems as it were the peculiar region of romance, from Cordoba to Roncesvalles. There is also in the work a happy mixture of the stories and names of the Moors, a people who, in a wonderful degree, impress the imagination and affect the heart, in consequence of their grandeur, gallantry, and misfortunes; and partly, perhaps, from the many plaintive ballads in which their achievements and fate are recorded.

Of the work of Cervantes, the first part is, I think, incontestibly the best. In the second we feel hurt and angry at the cruelty of the deceptions practised by the duke and duchess on Don Quixote; and surely, the chimerical conceptions which spontaneously arise in his mind from the view of natural objects, are more entertaining than those which are forced on it by artificial combination, and the instrumentality of others.

The first part of Don Quixote was given to the world in 1605, and the second in 1615. In the interval between these two periods, in the year 1614, and while Cervantes was preparing for the press, an author who assumed the name of Avelleneda published at Tarragona his continuation of the first part of Don Quixote. This is the work which is so frequently mentioned and reviled in the second part by Cervantes, especially in the preface; yet so little is this production known, that many have supposed that Cervantes only combated a phantom of his own imagination. Some personal quarrel had probably existed between these authors, as the preface of Avelleneda contains not only much unfair criticism on the writings of his enemy, but a vast deal of personal abuse: he reminds him that he is now as old as the castle of San Cervantes, and so churlish that no friend will furnish his works with commendatory sonnets, which he is in consequence obliged to borrow from Prester John. The only apology, he continues, for the absurdities of the first part of Don Quixote is, that it was written in prison, and must necessarily have been infected with the filth of such a residence. Cervantes probably felt that his old age, poverty, and imprisonment, were not very suitable subjects of ridi-

cule to his countrymen; and the provocation he had received certainly justified his censure of Avelleneda in the second part of Don Quixote.

The work of Avelleneda, which is thus loaded with personal abuse, is also full of the most unblushing plagiarisms from Cervantes, from whom he principally differs by his incidents chiefly glancing at Don Belianis, instead of Amadis de Gaul. In the continuation by Avelleneda, Don Quixote's brain being anew heated by the perusal of romances, he condemns himself for his inactive life, and for omitting the duties incumbent on him, in the deliverance of the earth from those haughty giants, who, against all right and reason, insult both knights and ladies. Discovering that Dulcinea is too reserved a princess, he resolves to be called the Loveless Knight (*Caballero Desamorado*), and to obliterate her recollection, which he justifies by the example of the Knight of the Sun, who, in similar circumstances, forsook Claridiana. At the commencement of his career, he mistakes an inn for a castle, the vintner for the constable, and a Galician wench, who corresponds to Maritornes, for a distressed Infanta; on entering Saragossa he delivers a criminal from the lash of the alguazils, whom he believes to be infamous and outrageous knights,—an incident evidently borrowed from the Galley Slaves of Cervantes.

On the other hand, either Avelleneda must have privately had access to the materials of the second part of Cervantes, or he has been imitated in turn. Thus, in the work of Avelleneda, we have the whole scheme of Sancho's government; and Don Alvaro de Tarfo, who encourages Don Quixote in his folly, by presenting him with persons dressed up as knights and giants, who come to defy him from all quarters of the globe, corresponds to the duke in the second part of Cervantes.

The two works are on the whole pretty much in the same tone; but we are told in the prefaces to the Spanish editions and French translations of Avelleneda, that in the peninsula he is generally thought to have surpassed Cervantes in the delineation of the character of Sancho, which, as drawn by Cervantes, is supposed to be a little inconsistent, since he sometimes talks like a guileless peasant, and



at other times as an arch and malicious knave. The Don Quixote, too, of Avelleneda never displays the good sense which the hero of Cervantes occasionally exhibits, and in his madness is more absurd and fantastical, especially when he indulges in visions of what is about to happen:—"I will then draw near the giant, and without ceremony say, Proud giant, I will fight you on condition the conqueror cut off the vanquished enemy's head. All giants being naturally haughty, he will accept the condition, and he will come down from his chariot, and mount a white elephant led by a little dwarf, his squire, who, riding a black elephant, carries his lance and buckler. Then we shall commence our career, and he will strike my armour, but not pierce it, because it is enchanted; he will then utter a thousand blasphemies against heaven, as is the custom of giants," &c. &c. Of this work of Avelleneda, there is a French paraphrased translation, attributed to Le Sage, from which Baker's English translation was formed. In Le Sage's version there are many interpolations, one of which is a story introduced in Pope's Essay on Criticism:—

"Once on a time La Mancha's knight, they say,  
A certain bard encountering on the way," &c.

The catastrophe is also totally changed. In the French work Don Quixote is shot in a scuffle, whereas in the Spanish original he is shut up in a mad-house at Toledo by Don Alvaro de Tarfo, who had contributed so much to the increase of his phrenzy.

Le Sage is also the reputed author of a sequel of the genuine Don Quixote, in which there are introduced a number of Spanish stories, and the adventures of Sancho after his master's death.

A work of the popularity of Don Quixote could not fail to produce numerous imitations. Of these, by far the most distinguished is Hudibras, the hero of which is a presbyterian justice, who, accompanied by a clerk of the sect of Independents, ranges the country in the rage of zealous ignorance, with the view of correcting abuses and repressing superstition. But much closer imitations have appeared in a more recent period. In *Pharsamon ou les Nouvelles folies Romanesques*, the earliest work of the celebrated Marivaux, and

the Sir Launcelot Greaves of Smollet, the heroes are struck with the same species of phrenzy with Don Quixote, which makes the resemblance too striking. In other imitations, a different species of madness is represented. Thus, in the *Female Quixote*, by Mrs Lennox, published in 1752, which is a satire on the romances of the school of Gomberville and Scuderi, the heroine is a lady of rank and amiable qualities, but, being brought up by her father in perfect seclusion, and accustomed to the constant perusal of such works as Clelia and Artamenes, she at length believes in the reality of their incidents, and squares her conduct to their fantastical representations. She fancies that every man is secretly in love with her, and lives in continual apprehension of being forcibly carried off. Her father's gardener she supposes to be a person of sublime quality in disguise; she also asks a waiting-maid to relate her lady's adventures, which happened to be of a nature not fit to be talked of, and discards a sensible lover, because she finds him deficient in the code of gallantry prescribed in her favourite compositions.

In the *Berger Extravagant* of Sorel, pastoral romance is ridiculed on a similar system: but perhaps the most agreeable imitation of Don Quixote, is the *History of Sylvio de Rosalva*, by the German poet Wieland. In the beginning of last century, the taste for fairy tales had become as prevalent, particularly in France, as that for romances of chivalry had been in Spain a century before. This passion Wieland undertook to ridicule: Sylvio de Rosalva, the hero of his romance, is a young gentleman of the province of Andalusia, who, having read nothing but tales of fairies, believed at last in the existence of these chimerical beings. Accidentally finding in a wood the miniature of a beautiful woman, he supposes it to be the representation of a spell-bound princess, predestined to his arms by the fairy Radiante, under whose protection he conceives himself placed. Most of the adventures occur in the search of this visionary mistress, whom he imagines to have been transformed into a blue butterfly, by a malevolent fairy, because she had declined an alliance with her nephew, the Green Dwarf. He is at length received at the castle of Lirias, of which the possessor



had a sister residing with him. Here he discovers that the miniature had been dropped by that lady, and that it had been done for her grandmother when at the age of sixteen. He is cured of his whims by this circumstance, and by the arguments of his friends, especially of the young lady, of whom he becomes deeply enamoured, and whose beauty the disenchanted enthusiast at length prefers to the imaginary charms which he had so long pursued. The leading incident of the picture is taken from the story of Seyfel Molouk, in the Persian Tales, where a prince of Egypt falls in love with a portrait, which, after spending his youth in search of the original, he discovers to be a miniature of a daughter of the King of Chahbal, a princess who was contemporary with Solomon, and had herself been the mistress of that great prophet. (See also Bahar-Danush, c. 35). In other respects the work of Wieland is a complete imitation of Don Quixote. Pedrillo, the attendant of Sylvio, is a character much resembling Sancho: he has the same love of proverbs, and the same sententious loquacity. Nothing can be worse judged, than so close an imitation of a work of acknowledged merit; at every step we are reminded of the prototype, and where actual beauties might be otherwise remarked, we only remember the excellence of the original, and the inferiority of the imitation. Sometimes, however, the German author has almost rivalled that solemn absurdity of argument, which constitutes the chief entertainment in the dialogues of the knight of La Mancha with his squire. "Pedrillo," said Don Sylvio, "I am greatly deceived, or we are now in the palace of the White Cat, who is a great princess, and a fairy at the same time. Now, if the sylphid with whom thou art acquainted belong to this palace, very probably the fairy thou sawest yesterday is the White Cat herself."

The story of Prince Biribinquer, however, is a part of the plan peculiar to Wieland. It is an episodic narrative, compiled from the most extravagant adventures of well-known fairy tales, and is related to Don Sylvio by one of his friends, for the purpose of restor-

ing him to common sense, by too outrageous a demand on his credulity.

The resemblance between the incidents in Sylvio de Rosalva and the adventures of Don Quixote, has led me away from the chronological arrangement of the comic romances, to which I now return.

About the period of the publication of Don Quixote, the Spaniards, whose works of fiction, fifty years before, were entirely occupied with Soldans of Babylon and Emperors of Trebizond, entertained themselves chiefly with the adventures of their swindlers and beggars. All works of the 16th century, which treat of the Spanish character and manners, particularly the Letters of Clenardus,<sup>1</sup> represent, in the strongest colours, the indolence of the lower classes, which led them to prefer mendicity and pilfering to the exercise of any trade or profession; and the ridiculous pride of those hidalgos, who, while in want of provisions and every necessary of life at home, strutted with immense whiskers, long rapiers, and ruffles without a shirt, through the streets of Madrid or Toledo. The miserable inns, the rapacity of officers of justice, and ignorance of medical practitioners, also afforded ample scope for the satire contained in the romances of this period, most of which are, perhaps, a little overcharged, but, like every other class of fiction, only present a highly-coloured picture of the manners of the age.

The work which first led the way to those compositions which were written in the *Gusto Picaresco*, as it has been called, was the *Lazaro de Tormes*, attributed to Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, who, as governor of Sienna and ambassador to the Pope from Spain, became the head of the imperial party in Italy during the reign of Charles V. Stern, tyrannical, and unrelenting, he was the counter-part of the Duke of Alva in his political character; but as an amatory poet, he was the most tender and elegant versifier of his country, and every line of his sonnets breathes a sigh for repose and domestic felicity. After his recall from Sienna he retired to Granada, where he wrote a history of the revolt of the Moors

<sup>1</sup> Nic. Clenardi. Epist. lib. duo. These are letters addressed to his friends in Holland and Germany by a Dutch scholar, who visited Spain in the middle of

the 16th century for the purpose of making researches in Arabian literature.



in that province, which, next to the work of Mariana, is the most valuable which has appeared in Spain: he also employed himself in collecting vast treasures of oriental MSS., which, at his death, he bequeathed to the king, and which still form the most precious part of the library of the Escorial.

Lazaro de Tormes was written by him in his youth, while studying at Salamanca, and was first printed in 1553. The hero of this work was the son of a miller, who dwelt on the banks of the Tormes. When eight years of age, he is presented by his mother as a guide to a blind beggar, whom he soon contrives to defraud of the money and provisions which were given to him by the charitable. After this he enters into the service of an ecclesiastic, who kept his victuals locked up in a chest, and a long chapter is occupied with the various stratagems to which Lazaro resorted in order to extract from it a few crusts of bread. When in the last extremity of hunger, he leaves the ecclesiastic to serve a hidalgo of Old Castile. This new master is in such want of the necessaries of life, that Lazaro is compelled to beg for him at convents and the gates of churches, while the hidalgo hears mass, or stalks along the chief promenades with all the dignity of a Duke D'Infantado.

This work seems to have been left incomplete by its original author, but a second part has been added by H. de Luna, who, in his preface, says, that his chief inducement to write was the appearance of an absurd continuation, in which Lazaro was said to have been changed to a fish. In De Luna's continuation, Lazaro, having embarked for Algiers, is picked up at sea by certain fishermen, and exhibited as a sea monster through the different towns of Spain, till having at length escaped, he arrives, after experiencing some adventures, at a hermitage. The recluse by whom it was inhabited dying soon after, he equips himself in the garb of the deceased, and subsists by the contributions of the charitable in the neighbourhood,—an incident which resembles part of the history of Don Raphael in Gil Blas.

Of those Spanish romances which were composed in imitation of Lazaro de Tormes, the most celebrated is the Life of

#### GUSMAN ALFARACHE,

which was written by Matthew Aleman, and was first printed in 1599, at Madrid. This impression was followed by twenty-five Spanish editions, and two French translations, one of which is by Le Sage.

Gusman Alfarache was the son of a Genoese merchant, who had settled in Spain. After the death of his father, the affairs of the family having fallen into disorder, young Gusman eloped from his mother, and commenced the career in which he met with those comical adventures, which form the subject of the romance. At a short distance from Seville, the place whence he set out, he falls in with a muleteer, with whom he lodges at different inns, the description of which gives us a very unfavourable impression of the *posadas* of Andalusia.

On his arrival at Madrid, Gusman fits himself out as a mendicant; he fixes on a station at the corner of a street, and the persons of all ranks who pass before him, officers, judges, ecclesiastics, and courtezans, give the author an opportunity of moralizing and commenting on the manners of his countrymen, during the reign of the Austrian Philips. Our hero speedily grafts the practices of a sharper on his present vocation, and is in consequence forced to fly to Toledo, where he assumes the character of a man of fashion, and engages in various intrigues. As long as his money lasts, Gusman is well received, but when it is expended he obtains some insight into the nature of the friendship of sharpers, and the love of courtezans. He accordingly sets out for Barcelona, whence he embarks for Genoa in order to present himself to his father's relations, by whom he is very harshly treated. From Genoa he is forced to beg his way to Rome, which, it seems, is the paradise of mendicants. There he attains great perfection in his art, by studying the rules of a society into which he is admitted. Among other devices, he so happily counterfeits an ulcer, that a Roman cardinal takes him home, and has him cured. He then becomes the page of his eminence, and rises into high favour, which continues till, being detected in various thefts, he is driven from the house with disgrace. Gusman seeks refuge with the French am-



bassador, who, being easily convinced of his innocence, takes him into his service. His master employs him to propitiate a Roman lady, of whom he was enamoured, but Gusman manages matters so unfortunately, that the intrigue becomes public. In despair at his bad success, Gusman asks leave to return to Spain. In his progress through Tuscany he meets with a person of the name of Saavedra, a man of similar dispositions with himself, by whom he is at first duped, but who afterwards assists him in duping others, while they pass through the different towns in the north of Italy. On his return to the capital of his native country, Gusman marries a woman with whom he expected to obtain a large fortune. This alliance proves very unfortunate; his affairs go into disorder, and after his wife's death he enters as a student at Alcalá, in order to obtain a benefice.

While at this university, our hero becomes acquainted with three sisters who were great musicians, but of suspected virtue; he marries the eldest, renounces the ecclesiastical profession, and arrives with his wife at Madrid. For some time the *menage* goes on prosperously, in consequence of her beauty and accommodating disposition, but having quarrelled with an admirer of some political importance, she and her husband are banished from Madrid, and retire to Seville, where the lady soon decamps with the captain of a Neapolitan vessel. By the interest of a Dominican confessor, Gusman is introduced into the house of an old lady, as her chamberlain, but manages the affairs intrusted to him with such villainy, that he is arrested and sent to the galleys. His fellow-slaves attempt to engage him in a plot, to deliver the vessels into the power of the corsairs. He reveals the conspiracy, and, having obtained his freedom for this service, employs himself afterwards in writing his history.

In this romance several interesting episodes are introduced. Of these, the best are the story of Osmin and Daraxa, recounted to Gusman by a fellow-traveller on the way from Seville to Madrid, and the tale which he hears related in the house of the French ambassador at Rome. The first is in the Spanish style, and describes the warm, refined, and generous gallantry, for which Gra-

nada was celebrated at the close of the 15th century. The second is in the Italian taste, and paints the dark mysterious intrigue, the black revenge, and atrocious jealousy, of which we have seen so many examples in the works of the novelists of that country, and which were not inconsistent with the disposition of the inhabitants. Another episode, the story of Lewis de Castro, and Roderigo de Montalvo, coincides with the 41st tale of Massuccio, with *La Precaution Inutile* of Scarron, and the under-plot concerning Dinant, Cleremont, and Lamira, in Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of the Little French Lawyer (see page 255).

The frequent introduction of these episodes, is one of the circumstances in which this romance bears a resemblance to *Gil Blas*, a work of which Gusman Alfarache has been regarded as the model. Gusman, indeed, is a much greater knave than *Gil Blas*, and never attains his dignity—the pictures of manners have little resemblance, and in the Spanish work there are tiresome moral reflections on every incident, while the French author leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions from the situations in which the characters are placed. Still, however, both heroes begin by being dupes, and afterwards become knaves. The same pleasantry on the officers of justice runs through both, and the story of Scipio, like that of Saavedra, is too much chalked out after the adventures of his master.

Whether this romance has suggested any notions to the author of *Gil Blas* or not, it was at least the origin of a swarm of Spanish works concerning the adventures of beggars, gypsies, and the lowest wretches. The *Picara Justina*, which bears the name of the licentiate Lopez de Ubeda as its author, but is generally attributed to Fra Anton Perez, seems to have been written to correspond with Gusman d'Alfarache. This romance, which was printed in 1605, commences, like Jonathan Wild, with an account of the ancestors of the heroine Justina, the daughter of an innkeeper, by whom she was early initiated into the art of imposing on passengers, and, after his death, continued, in various capacities, to dupe the inhabitants of Leon and the Castiles. The work is also interspersed with many moral and satirical reflections.



The Life of Paul the Sharper, by Quevedo, is of a similar description. It contains the history of a barber's son, who first serves a young student of quality at Alcala, which gives the author an opportunity of presenting us with some curious pictures of the manners and usages practised at that celebrated seminary of education. After Paul arrives at Madrid, the scenes described are in the lowest abyss of vice and misery. He first becomes member of a fraternity which existed by what has been called *raising the wind*. The chief incidents of the romance consist of stratagems to procure a crust of dry bread, and having eat it, to appear with due decorum in public, by the art of fitting on a ruffle so as to suggest the idea of a shirt, and adjusting a cloak in such a manner as to make it be believed that there are clothes under it. Paul afterwards associates with a band of braves, and the consequences of an enterprise in which he engages oblige him to embark for the West Indies. An incident which occurs in this romance, while Paul is attending his young master at Alcala, seems to have suggested the story of the parasite, who eats the omelet of Gil Blas :—"L'ornement d'Oviedo, le flambeau de la philosophie, la huitieme merveille du monde."

Indeed, in most of the Spanish romances in this style of composition, we occasionally meet with stories of which the author of Gil Blas has availed himself. But of all the works in the *Gusto Picaresco*, Le Sage has been chiefly indebted to the *Relaciones dela Vida del Escudero Marcos de Obregon* ;—not merely that the character of Gil Blas is formed on that of Obregon, but many of the incidents have been closely imitated. This work, which has been a subject of considerable curiosity in this country, was written towards the close of the 16th century by Vincent Espinel, born in 1551, and styling himself *Capellan del Rey en el Hospital de la Ciudad de Ronda*. It was first printed in 1618 ; it is related in the person of the hero, and is divided into three parts or *relaciones*, which are again divided into chapters. The prologue contains a story which is nearly the same with that in the

introduction to Gil Blas, concerning the two scholars and the soul of the licentiate Pedro Garcias. In the second chapter several anecdotes are related, as examples of composure of temper, one of which is of a gentleman who, on receiving a challenge to meet his enemy at six in the morning, said, that he never rose till mid-day for his amusement, and could not be expected to rise at six to have his throat cut,<sup>1</sup>—an answer which is made by one of Gil Blas' masters, Don Mathias de Sylva (l. 3. c. 8). We are told in the following chapter, that Marcos entered into the service of Doctor Sagredo, a man of great arrogance and loquacity, and who was as much in the practice of blood-letting as the Sangrado of Le Sage. The chief occupation of Marcos was to attend the doctor's wife, Donna Mergellina, whom he introduced to a barber lad of his acquaintance, and an intrigue is detailed, of which the incidents are precisely the same as those in the history of Diego the *Garçon Barbier*, in Gil Blas. Indeed, Diego mentions, in the course of his relation, that the attendant of Mergellina was called Marcos Obregon. After leaving the service of the doctor, and experiencing various adventures, Marcos arrives one night at a hermitage, where he recounts to the recluse the early events of his life. Having shown a taste for learning in his youth, he was sent by his father, under care of a muleteer, to Salamanca. On the way he meets with a parasite, who, by the most extravagant flattery, contrives to sup at his expense, and having satisfied his hunger, declares that there is a grandee in the neighbourhood who would give 200 ducats to see such an ornament of literature. Marcos having repaired to the house, finds that the master is blind, and is jeeringly told by the parasite that the proprietor would give 200 ducats to see him or any one. In the course of the journey to Salamanca we have also a story which occurs in Gil Blas, of the amorous muleteer, who, in order to carry on an intrigue, more commodiously disperses the company in the *Posada* at Cacabelos. Instead of going to study at Salamanca, young Marcos enters into the service of the Count of Lemos,

<sup>1</sup> Decidle a vuestro amo, que digo yo, que para cosas que me importan de mucho gusto, no me suelo levantar hasta las doce del dia : que por què quiere

que para matarme me levante tan de manana ? y bolviendose del otro lado, se torno a dormir.



and afterwards of the Duke Medina Sidonia. While in the employment of the latter, he embarks from the south of Spain, with other domestics of the duke, for Italy. In the course of the voyage they land at an islet near the coast of Majorca, and during their stay habitually repair to a delightful cave in a wood for pleasure and refreshment. They are warned by the governor of the island of the danger they incur by this practice, as the spot is frequently resorted to by Turkish corsairs. This notice is disregarded, and on the following day the party is attacked by pirates. Supposing that some of their friends, disguised as Turks, had merely wished to alarm them, they do not take the proper measures for defence, and are accordingly overpowered and made prisoners. Marcos is carried to Algiers, where he is sold to a master whose daughter falls in love with him. All these incidents have been literally copied in the history of Don Raphael in *Gil Blas*. Like Don Raphael, too, Marcos Obregon, on his escape from Algiers, first lands at Genoa. While at Milan a courtesan called Camilla, contrives to elope with his baggage, and to possess herself of a valuable ring by means of the same stratagem by which *Gil Blas* is duped in the adventure of the *Hotel Garni*. From Spain Don Marcos returns to his own country, and towards the end of the work he again meets his old master Doctor Sagredo, with whom he has a long conversation. While in his company he falls under the power of banditti, and is confined in a cave which was the haunt of these outlaws and their captain, Roque Amador. During his detention in this captivity the robbers bring to the cavern a lady, who proves to be Donna Mergillina, the wife of Doctor Sagredo. With her Marcos soon after contrives to escape from the cave, and arrives in safety at Madrid. This adventure, which is the termination of the Spanish work, has been placed by Le Sage near the commencement of his entertaining, but, it must be confessed, not very original production.

Le Sage has only imitated the more polite knavery of those Spanish novels which were written in the *Gusto Picaresco*. The deeper scenes of vice and wretchedness depicted in such forcible, though not very pleasing colours, in Paul the Sharper, and Lazarillo de Tormes,

form a species of sombre gaiety peculiar to the Spaniards. The works which in this country approach nearest to that taste, are, De Foe's *Bampfylde Moore Carew*, and the *Jonathan Wild* of Fielding.

It may now be proper to mention a few of the comic romances which appeared in France in the course of the 17th century. They were nearly coeval with the heroic romances to be afterwards mentioned, and, like them, preceded the introduction of the modern novel; but they are not of such scarceness as to require, nor such merit as to deserve, a particular analysis. The earliest and most celebrated is Scarron's<sup>1</sup>

#### ROMAN COMIQUE.

so called from its relating the adventures of a troop of comedians, or strolling players, during their residence in Mans, and its neighbourhood. The idea of writing a work of this description first occurred to the author on his arrival at Mans, to take possession of a benefice to which he had been presented. It was suggested by some striking peculiarities of local scenery, and some ludicrous incidents which happened to a company of actors who were there at the time. Nor were strollers of this description so far beneath the notice of genius and refined satire, nor were the talents of the author so misemployed, as in this age and country we may be apt to imagine. In the time of Scarron these persons were treated with absurd attention and respect, by the families who inhabited those districts through which they passed. Their consequent extravagance and conceit provoked and merited chastisement, and was not considered underserving the satire of such writers as Scarron and Le Sage.

The work commences with a grotesque description of the equipage of a company of strolling players, who arrive at Mans on their way to Alençon, having been forced to leave the town in which they had last performed, on account of their door-keeper having murdered an officer of the intendant of the province. They agree to act for one night in the tennis court; but, as the whole company was

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 24.



not expected till the following day, a difficulty arises from the smallness of their number, which consisted of a young man, called Destin, who usually played the parts of the heroes and lovers; Rancune, and a single actress. This objection is obviated by Rancune, who observed that he had performed a drama alone, acting a king, queen, and ambassador, in the same scene. A second difficulty, however, occurs from one of the other division of the troop having the key of the wardrobe. M. Rappiniere, the *Lieutenant de Prevot*, who had examined the strollers on their arrival, presents the actress with an old robe belonging to his wife, and the male performers are invested with the garments of two young men, who are playing a match at tennis.

In a few minutes every thing is arranged. The spectators having taken their places, a dirty sheet rises, and Destin is discovered in the character of Herod, lying on a mattress, with a basket on his head for a crown, and and repeating, in the tones of Mondori,

Fantome injurieux, qui troubles mon repos !<sup>1</sup>

The actress performs the parts of Mariamne and Salome, while Rancune gives universal satisfaction in all the other characters of the piece. In the most interesting scene of the tragedy, however, the two young men who had now finished their match at tennis, rush on the stage to vindicate the habits worn by Herod and Phrerora. Some of the spectators espouse one part and some another; and the tragedy concludes with distresses more real, though less heroic, than the death of Mariamne, and the despair of the Jewish monarch. After this affray there follows an amusing account of a supper given to the actors by one of the inhabitants of Mans. On the following day the rest of the players arrive, and among others Mad. L'Etoile, the *soi-disant* sister of Destin, and Leander, his valet, who already aspired to the first situation in the company. They continue to act for some time at Mans, and at length are invited to perform at a villa in the neighbourhood; but a short while before the entertainment commences, one of the actresses is forcibly carried off

while rehearsing her part in the garden. The other performers set out in quest of her, and the second half of the work chiefly consists of the adventures they meet with in their pursuit.

Of this romance the more serious part relates to the amours of Destin and Mad. L'Etoile, and the story of Leander, who proves to be a young man of fashion, but having been captivated with the beauty of one of the actresses, he had associated himself to the strolling company. The more comical portion consists in the delineation of the characters of Rancune, and Ragotin, and an account of their absurdities. Of these the former, as his name imports, was noted for malice and envy. He found something to blame in every one of his own profession; Bellerose was stiff; Mondori harsh; Floridor frigid—from all which he wished it to be inferred, that he himself was the only faultless comedian. At the time when the pieces of Hardi were acted, he played the part of the nurse under a mask, and since the improvement in the drama, had performed the confidants and ambassadors. Ragotin was an attorney, who, falling in love with Mad. L'Etoile, attached himself to the company; he wrote immeasurable quantities of bad poetry, and on one occasion proposed reading to the players a work of his own composition, entitled *Les Faits et Gestes de Charlemagne en vingt quatre Journées*. A great part of the romance is occupied with the ridiculous distresses into which this absurd character falls, partly by his own folly, and partly by the malice of Rancune. These are sometimes amusing, but are generally quite extravagant, and exceed all bounds of probability.

There are also a number of episodes in the Roman Comique, as *L'Amante Invisible*—a *Trompeur Trompeur et Demi*, &c. which bear a strong resemblance to the *Nouvelles Tragi-Comiques*, by the same author. The scene of these episodes is invariably laid in Spain; they are always declared to be translated from the language of that country, and many of them are so in fact. All of them are love stories,

<sup>1</sup> This was the play of Marianne, by Tristan L'Hermite. Mondori died in consequence of the violence with which he had represented the transports of Herod, as Montfleury is said to have ex-

pired while acting the furies of Orestes. It was said on one of these occasions, "Il n'y aura plus de poete qui ne veuille avoir l'honneur de crever un comedien en sa vie."



containing a good deal of intrigue, and terminating happily.

It is said to have been the intention of Scarron to have added a third part to the *Roman Comique*; indeed, in its present state it ends very abruptly, which has induced different authors to attempt to bring it to a close. One continuation, written under the fictitious name of M. Offray, conducts the troop to Alençon, where Ragotin undergoes disgraces equally extravagant, but less entertaining than those which he had formerly experienced. In another succeeding part, by the Abbé Preschac, Ragotin is again the principal character, and is much occupied in persuading a quack doctor, whom he believes to be a magician, to forward the success of his passion for Mad. L'Etoile. In a third sequel, which is by an anonymous author, the part of Ragotin is entirely abandoned, as also that of Rancune, and the reader is presented with a continuation of the more serious part of the romance, particularly the story of Destin, who turns out to be a son of the Count de Glaris, having been changed at nurse according to the Irish fashion.

The *Roman Comique* has also been versified by M. d'Orvilliers, and published in that poetical form at Paris, in 1733. Fontaine, too, has written a comedy, which comprehends most of the characters and best situations in the work of Scarron.

In the representations of Scarron, the provincial manners of the age in which the author lived are delineated, and he has exhibited, in lively and striking colours, what has been termed *le ridicule Campagnard*. The absurdities of the citizens of Paris have been painted by Furetiere,<sup>1</sup> in his

#### ROMAN BOURGEOIS,

which, in the commencement, describes the ridiculous courtship by a counsellor, called Nicodemus, of Javotte, the daughter of a rascally attorney. Nicodemus ingratiates himself with the father of his mistress, by writing his papers for tenpence a sheet, and pleading his causes for half fees. Matters are almost finally arranged, when everything is interrupted by

the unexpected appearance of a girl, called Lucretia, who claimed a previous promise of marriage; and before Nicodemus had disengaged himself from this engagement, another lover presented himself, who was preferred by the father of Javotte. This intruder was an advocate, as well as his rival. The only time he had ever appeared at the bar, was when, twenty years before, he took the oaths to observe the regulations of court, to which he strictly adhered, as he never enjoyed an opportunity of transgressing them. But he possessed a considerable fortune of his own, a great part of which he had laid out in the purchase of old china, and black-letter books with wooden bindings. His dress formed a memorial of all the fashions that had prevailed in France for two centuries. In order to qualify herself for such a husband, Javotte had been allowed to frequent an assembly of wits, which was attended by a young gentleman, called Pancroce, who persuaded her to elope with him.

In this romance there are some spirited sketches, considerable fertility of delineation, and knowledge of human character; but the portraits, like those in the *Roman Comique*, too often degenerate into caricatures.

#### POLITICAL ROMANCE.

The origin of this species of romance has been traced as far back as the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon. Whether that celebrated performance be intended as a romance or history, has been the subject of much controversy. The basis of that part which relates the events of the life of Cyrus, from his fortieth year till his death, may be historically true; but the details of his childhood and education, which embrace the period from his birth to his sixteenth year, must be entirely the offspring of the author's imagination.

I am not certain, whether under this class of romances I should comprehend the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More. Every thing in that work is indeed imaginary; but, as no particular story is carried on, it may rather be accounted a political treatise than a romance. Like the writings of other speculative politicians, its origin was derived from the Re-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 25.



public of Plato. The Utopia, like the Commonwealth of that philosopher, is the ideal picture of a nation which would indeed be poor and wretched, but which in the representation of the author is perfectly happy. By the detail of its institutions, he obliquely censures the defects of existing governments, and proposes a more perfect model as a subject of imitation.

The author feigns, that while at Antwerp he had met with a person of the name of Raphael, who had accompanied Americo Vespucci to the New World. While on this voyage he had visited the island of Utopia, the name of which imports its non-existence. The first book, which is merely introductory, contains a dialogue chiefly on government, that passed between the author and this imaginary person. In the second book, the traveller gives a geographical description of the island; the relations of the inhabitants in social life, their magistrates, their arts, their systems of war and religion. On the latter subject, which could hardly be expected from the practice of the author, the most unbounded toleration is granted. The greater part of the inhabitants believed in one Spirit, all-powerful and all-pervading; but others practised the worship of heroes, and the adoration of stars. A community of wealth is a fundamental principle of this republic, and the structure what might be expected from such a basis. Indeed the interest of the Utopia arises solely from the classic elegance of its style, and the curiosity which is naturally felt concerning the sentiments of distinguished characters.

This work was written about 1516, and soon became the admiration of all the classical scholars of the age. An English translation, by Robinson, has been lately published by Mr Dibdin, with a literary introduction. The life of Sir Thomas More has been written by his son-in-law, Roper, by his great-grandson, More, and within these few years by Mr Cayley: but the subject is too copious and important to admit of abridgment here. His character was indeed clouded by superstition, and the persecuting zeal by which the votaries of the Roman Catholic persuasion are too often distinguished, but there remains ample room for admiration in the splendour of his legal acquirements, the unrivalled felicity of

his temper, and, above all, the depth and elegance of his classical learning, more wonderful, if we consider the country in which he lived, the multiplicity and importance of his avocations, and his premature fate.—“*Quid tandem non praestitisset admirabilis ista naturae felicitas, si hoc ingenium instituisset Italia, si totum Musarum sacris vacaret, si ad justam frugem ac veluti autumnum suum maturuisset?*”

Sir Thomas More's Utopia suggested many speculative works, somewhat in the form of a romance, concerning perfect systems of government. Of this description is Harrington's Oceana, which appeared in England about the middle of the 17th century, and though it be the model of a perfect republic, is perhaps the most rational of all similar productions.

The

#### ARGENIS

of Barclay is usually numbered among political romances, though, I think, it is entitled to be thus ranked more from the disquisitions introduced, than from any very obvious analogy which the story bears to political incidents.

The author was of a Scotch family, but was born in France in 1582. Offended, it is said, at the request of James I. to translate the Arcadia into Latin, he composed the Argenis, to show he could write a better original. It was completed and published in 1621, which was the year of the author's death.

Argenis is represented as the daughter and heiress of Meliander, King of Sicily, and the romance chiefly consists of the war carried on to obtain her hand, by two rivals, Lycogenes, a rebellious subject of Meliander, and Poliarchus, Prince of Gaul.

It is generally believed that all the incidents in the Argenis have an allusion to the political transactions which took place in France during the War of the League, but it is difficult to determine with precision what are the particular events or characters represented. Each commentator has applied them according to his own fancy, for which the indefinite nature of the composition gave ample scope. Meliander, however, it seems to be



universally allowed, is intended for Henry III. Argenis typifies the succession of the crown; Lycogenes is the family of Guise, or the whole faction of the league; Poliarchus, Henry IV., or the aggregate of his party. The most minute incidents in the romance have been also historically applied, but in a manner so forced and capricious, that they might as plausibly be wrested to correspond with the political events in any age or country, as those which occurred in France towards the close of the 16th century. On the whole, there appears little to distinguish the Argenis from the common heroic romance, except that there are hardly any episodes introduced, and that it contains a great number of political disquisitions, in which such high monarchical notions are generally expressed, that the author has been frequently accused as the advocate of arbitrary principles of government. We are informed in a Latin life of Barclay, that it was a favourite work of Cardinal Richelieu, and suggested to him many of his political expedients. Cowper, the poet, recommends Argenis to his correspondents, Mr Rose and Lady Hesketh, as the most amusing romance that ever was written. "It is," says he in a letter to the former, "interesting in a high degree—richer in incident than can be imagined—full of surprises which the reader never forestalls, and yet free from all entanglement and confusion. The style, too, appears to me to be such as would not dishonour Tacitus himself." The Latinity, however, of Barclay, has, on the other hand, been severely ridiculed in the celebrated Spanish work, *Fra Gerundio*. "There you have the Scotchman, John Barclay, who would not say *exhortatio* to escape the flames, but *parænesis*, which signifies the same, but is a little more of the Greek; nor *obedire*, but *decedere*, which is of more abstruse signification, and is equivocal into the bargain."

Though the beautiful fiction of *Telemachus* be rather an epic poem in prose, than a romance, it seems to have led the way to several political romances, or, at least, to have nourished a taste for this species of composition.

The *Cyropædia* of Xenophon, which may be considered perhaps as the origin of all political romance, seems more particularly to have sug-

gested two works, which appeared in France about the commencement of the 18th century, *Les Voyages de Cyrus* and *Le Repos de Cyrus*. Of these the former work is by the Chevalier Ramsay, the friend of Fenelon, and tutor to the sons of the Pretender. The author has chosen, as the subject of his romance, that part of the life of Cyrus, which extends from the sixteenth to the fortieth year of his age, a period of which nothing is said in the *Cyropædia*. During this interval, Ramsay has made his hero travel according to fancy, and by this means takes occasion to describe the manners, religion, and policy, of the countries which are visited, as also some of the principal events in their history. The Persian prince wanders through Greece, Syria, and Egypt, and in the course of his journey enjoys long philosophical and political conversations with Zoroaster, Solon, and the prophet Daniel. What is said concerning the manners of the different nations, is fortified by passages from the ancient philosophers and poets. The author exhibits considerable acquaintance with chronology and history, and enters profoundly into the fables of the ancients, from which he attempts to show that the leading truths of religion are to be found in the mythological systems of all nations. His work, however, is rather a treatise intended to form the mind of a young prince than a fiction. The only romantic incident is the love of Cyrus for Cassandana, which occupies a considerable part of the first book, where the usual obstacles of the prohibition of parents, and a powerful rival, are interposed to the happiness of the lovers. In 1728, a satire on Ramsay's *Cyrus*, entitled *La Nouvelle Cyropædie, ou Reflexions de Cyrus sur ses Voyages*, was printed at Amsterdam. In this work, Cyrus, having become master of Asia, complains, in six evening conversations with his confidant Araspes, of the pedantic and ridiculous part he is made to act in his travels. A serious criticism was written by the Pere Vinot, to which Ramsay made a suitable reply.

*Le Repos de Cyrus* embraces the same period of the life of the Persian prince as the work of Ramsay, and comprehends his journey into Media, his chase on the frontiers of Assyria, his wars with the king of that country, and his return to Persia.



Most of the works which come under the class of political Romances, are but little interesting in their story, and mankind have long been satisfied of the folly of speculations concerning perfect systems of government. Indeed, in a history of fiction, there are only two kinds of compositions, which seem entitled to minute analysis; first, those which, though comparatively imperfect, have been the earliest models of a peculiar series of romances; and, secondly, the most perfect production of the order to which it belongs—the *patriarch*, as it were, of the family, and most *illustrious of the descendants*. In many instances, however, the most distinguished work of the class is so well known and popular, that any detail concerning it might appear tiresome and superfluous. This is peculiarly the case with the *Telemaque*, which has been familiar to every one almost from childhood; and accordingly, it is more suitable to analyze the next most perfect specimen, which, in the class of political romances, happens not to be very generally known. In this view it may be proper to give some account of the romance of

#### SETHOS.

This work, which was first published in 1731, was written by the Abbé Terrasson, a *Savant*, who in his *éloge*, pronounced by D' Alembert, is represented as at the head of the practical philosophers of his age. "Calm, simple, and candid, he was so far," says D' Alembert, "from soliciting favours, that he did not know the names of the persons by whom they were distributed. More a philosopher than Democritus, he did not even deign to laugh at the absurdities of his contemporaries; and equally indifferent about others and himself, he seemed to contemplate from the planet Saturn the Earth which we inhabit."

The author of Sethos feigns, in his preface, that his work is translated from the Greek MS. of a writer who probably lived in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. After bestowing due praise on the *Telemaque*, and perhaps more than due on the *Voyages de Cyrus*, he observes, that his romance does not merely contain, like these works, a course of education, but the practical application of its principles to the varied events of life. Another

object of Terrasson was to exhibit whatever has been ascertained concerning the antiquities, manners, and customs of the ancient Egyptians, or the origin of sciences and arts. It is in this view, perhaps, that Sethos is chiefly valuable, and in fact there would be few antiquarian works more precious, had the author, who was profoundly learned, appended in notes the original authorities from which he derived his information.

About fifty years before the Trojan war, Osoroth, when somewhat advanced in life, succeeded to the throne of Memphis, the second in dignity of the four great sovereignties of Egypt. Previous to his accession he had espoused Nepthe, princess of This, another Egyptian monarchy, and by her he had a son called Sethos, the hero of the romance. Osoroth, who has many traits of character in common with Louis XV., is represented as one of those feeble, indolent, and indifferent princes, who are the best or worst of kings as chance furnishes them with good or bad administrators of the royal authority. This monarch committed the management of state affairs to Nepthe; and what seemed to the public an enlightened choice, was nothing but the result of his natural indifference. In fact, the queen governed admirably, partly owing to her own distinguished talents, and partly to the councils of Amedes, a sage whom she consulted on every important occurrence. When Sethos was eight years old, the queen, whose health had been long enfeebled, was seized with a dangerous illness. Meanwhile Osoroth, who, though the monarch of a great people, presented the singular spectacle of not knowing how to employ his time, had become entangled by the assiduities and arts of Daluca, a lady of the court; and the queen foresaw with pain, that in the event of her death, the destiny of Sethos might depend on this worthless woman. She at length expired, after having intrusted her son to the wise Amedes, and having, at the same moment, consigned to the young prince a casket of precious jewels, recommending to him above all carefully to preserve a heart-shaped emerald, adorned with figures in relief of Osiris, Isis, and Horus.

As the solemn invocations for the health of Nepthe had afforded the author an opportunity of representing some of the religious rites of



Egypt, her pompous funeral furnishes an occasion of describing their obsequies. The Egyptians, according to Herodotus, were the first people who believed in the immortality of the soul, and it appeared from the simplicity of their palaces, compared with the magnificence of their tombs, that they were less occupied with their transitory dwellings on earth than with the prospect of their everlasting abodes. Ere the body of a prince could be conveyed by Charon to the Labyrinth in the midst of Lake Mœris, a judgment, whether the deceased was worthy of funeral rites, was pronounced by forty-one just and inexorable judges. The high priest of Memphis delivered on the present occasion a funeral oration on the late queen—"Portrait," says D'Alembert, "que Tacite eut admiré, et dont Platon eut conseillé la lecture a tous les Rois."

On the death of Nepthe the wicked Daluca having first become regent, and being afterwards espoused by Osoroth, formed an administration, which was a complete contrast to that of the late queen. Her dislike of Sethos was increased by giving birth to two sons, and in order that her machinations against that prince might succeed, she began by corrupting the morals of the court. The progress of depravity, and the methods by which it was produced, are portrayed with much force of satire. Meanwhile the education of Sethos commenced, a subject which is introduced by a beautiful but succinct account of the state of science and arts in Egypt, as also by a description of the palace and gardens of the kings of Memphis, which formed one vast museum, stored with every means of exercising the talents and preserving the knowledge of mankind.

The admirable genius of young Sethos seconded well the instructions of the sage Amedes, who prepared him by every exercise of mind and body for those trials which, from his situation, would probably ensue. Several instances of the prince's courage and address are related, as his being the first who descended from the Great Pyramid with his face towards the spectators, and his taking captive a huge serpent which laid waste a province of the kingdom. After having given sufficient proofs of prudence and courage, Amedes resolved

secretly to procure for his pupil, now sixteen years of age, the supreme honour of initiation, a dignity which could only be attained by uncommon fortitude and sufferings. The whole process of this august ceremony—the subterranean temples, and palaces, and gardens of the Egyptian priests, are finely delineated, and form by much the most interesting portion of the work.

Preparatory to the initiation, Amedes having obtained permission for his pupil to visit for a few months the temples of Egypt, conducted him by night to the Great Pyramid. They entered it, and reached at length that mysterious Well, concerning which so much has been said by travellers. (Clarke's Travels, vol. iii. p. 138, &c.) Down this they descended by little secret steps of iron, and approached two brazen gates, which opened softly, but shut with a tremendous crash. Sethos beheld at a distance, through iron grates, high illuminated arcades, and heard the most harmonious music, which he was told by Amedes (who had been himself initiated) proceeded from priests and priestesses in a subterranean temple. He was also informed that he had now an opportunity of entering on the trials preparatory to initiation,—trials which required the most heroic courage and greatest prudence. Sethos, of course, determined to proceed, undismayed by an alarming inscription on the portal through which he now passed.

After leaving Amedes, Sethos walked more than a league without discovering any new object. He came at length to an iron door, and a little farther on to three men, "armés d'un casque qui étoit chargé d'une tête d'Anubis : c'est ce qui donna lieu à Orphée de faire de ces trois hommes les trois têtes du chien Cerbere, qui permettoit l'entrée de l'Enfer sans en permettre la sortie." This idea is carried on through the whole of the author's subterranean description, and is doubtless the foundation of Warburton's hypothesis concerning the sixth book of Virgil. The author relates in a most striking manner the corporeal purification of Sethos by fire and water and air, subsequent to which his soul is in like manner refined by invocations and instructions, by silence, solitude, and neglect.



At the conclusion of his initiation, Sethos was conducted through all the subterranean abodes of the priests, the description of which is almost copied from the sixth book of Virgil. No class of men have been so splendid in their buildings as priests, and as Egypt was the country of all others in which they were most powerful, they had nowhere erected such magnificent structures. Nothing can be more happy than Terrasson's picture of the subterranean Elysium, and the art with which the priests employed its scenes in the illusory visions which they presented to those who consulted them. The mysteries of the Pantheon are also unveiled, and the author concludes his highly interesting account of the initiation with a description of the Isiack pomp, and the manifestation of Sethos to the people.

The romance now becomes less amusing, and the author seems to be deserted by his genius as soon as he quits the sombre magnificence of ancient superstition. By the bad management of Daluca, the kingdom of Memphis was involved in a quarrel with the neighbouring monarchies. Sethos departed for the seat of war, where he distinguished himself, not merely by his wonderful valour, but by extraordinary warlike inventions. Owing, however, to the treachery of the general of Memphis, who had been commanded by Queen Daluca to rid her of Sethos, he was desperately wounded, and left for dead in a nocturnal skirmish with the enemy. Being afterwards discovered to be alive by some Ethiopian soldiers, he was sold by them as a slave to the Phœnicians, whom he accompanied in a great expedition to Taprobana (Ceylon). After the establishment of the Phœnicians on that island, Sethos, now under the name of Cheres, recommended himself so strongly to the commander of the expedition by his wisdom and valour, that he is furnished with a fleet to make a voyage of discovery round Africa. In this enterprise Sethos unites the skill of Columbus with the benevolence of Cook and the military genius of Cæsar. He civilizes Guinea, and forms a vast commercial establishment, which he names New Tyre.

Meanwhile an imposter, called Azores, availing himself of a report, now generally spread

through Egypt, that Sethos was yet alive, resolved to personate the prince, and being aided by a host of Arabians, he besieged Hieropolis, the capital of the King of This, whose daughter, the Princess Mnevie, he had vainly sought in marriage. Intelligence of this imposture having reached Sethos, he arrived in Egypt, still bearing the name of Cheres, defeated Azores under the walls of Hieropolis, and drove him back to Arabia. Sethos was accordingly received with the utmost joy and gratitude by the King of This, and a mutual passion gradually arose between him and the Princess Mnevie. He procured from the other three kings of Egypt the title of Conservator, and general of the Egyptian forces, in which capacity he again defeated Azores, who had attacked the territories of Memphis with a force he had anew assembled.

While engaged in this war, the Princess Mnevie, anxious at the absence and dangers of her lover, consulted the priests of Helio- polis with respect to his destiny, which furnishes another opportunity to the author of giving a representation, in which he excels, of the solemn witchery employed by the priests of Egypt. Sethos, on his return to Memphis, to which he conducted Azores as a captive, commenced the public trial and examination of that imposter in presence of the king and princes. The slave instantly recognizes his master, and the true Sethos, at length throwing aside his disguise, gives incontestible proofs of his identity. Osoroth immediately resigns the crown in his favour, and Daluca poisons herself. Sethos, after reigning five days, and causing his name to be inscribed in the list of the kings of Egypt as Sethos Sosis, or Sethos the Conservator, gives up the kingdom to his half-brother Prince Beon, one of the sons of Daluca. Not satisfied with this, he procures the consent of the Princess Mnevie to marry his second brother Pemphos, who had been long attached to her. Sethos himself, with the title of King Conservator, retires to the temples of the priests of Memphis, whither ambassadors are frequently sent to him from different kings, and he is almost daily consulted by his brothers.

This extravagant disinterestedness of the hero, in resigning his kingdom to one brother and his mistress to another, is the circum-



stance at which the reader of Sethos is most disappointed and displeased. Terrasson might consider the *summum bonum* as consisting in geometry and retirement, but this is not the general sentiment of the readers of romance. It is very sublime, indeed, to give up a kingdom and a mistress, but the Conservator of Egypt must have sometimes thought, and the readers of Sethos will always think, that he had better have retained them both :—

Lorsque Je prête à tous un main secourable,  
Par quel destin faut il que ma vertu m'accable!

Indeed, the whole of the latter part of Sethos—his voyage round Africa, and his wars with the imposter, are insufferably tiresome. The earlier books, however, are uncommonly interesting, and D'Alembert, while he confesses that the philosophy and erudition which the author had introduced were little to the taste of an age and nation which sacrificed everything to amusement, declares, “qu'il n'y a rien dans le Telemaque qui approche d'un grand nombre de caracteres, de traits de morale, de reflexions fines et de discours quelquefois sublimes qu'on trouve dans Sethos.” “The author of Sethos,” says Gibbon (Miscellanies, vol. iv. p. 195), “was a scholar and philosopher. His book has far more originality and variety than Telemachus; yet Sethos is forgotten, and Telemachus will be immortal. That harmony of style, and the great talent of speaking to the heart and passions, which Fenelon possessed, was unknown to Terrasson. I am not surprised that Homer was admired by the one and criticised by the other.” Indeed Terrasson is better known, at least in this country, as a second Zoilus, than as the author of Sethos.

Besides its intrinsic merit, the romance of Sethos is curious, as being the foundation of the hypothesis concerning the 6th book of the *Æneid* maintained by Warburton in his Divine Legation of Moses, which was first published in 1738, seven years after the appearance of Sethos. Servius, one of the earliest commentators on Virgil, had long ago remarked, that many things in the *Æneid* were delivered according to the profound learning of the Egyptian theology (*Multa per altam scientiam theologicorum Ægyptiorum*). This idea is carried on through the whole of Ter-

rasson's description of the subterranean dwellings of the Egyptian priests, and the initiation of his hero. “Mais on voit clairement dans les trois epreuves du feu, de l'eau et de l'air, les trois purifications que les ames doivent essayer avant que de revenir a la vie, et que le plus grand poete des Latins a empruntées dans le sixieme livre de son Eneide : *infectum eluitur scelus aut exuritur igni*, sans omettre la circonstance de la suspension a l'air agité ou aux vents : Le fleuve d'oubli et la porte d'ivoire y ont leur place.” And again, “J'aurois lieu de faire ici une invocation semblable a celles des poetes qui entreprennent une description des Enfers.—Qu'il me soit permis de reveler les choses qu'J'ai apprises, et de mettre au jour ce qui se passoit dans les entrailles de la terre et sous le voile impénétrable du plus profond silence. A peine Sethos fut il descendu dans le souterrain du coté du temple superieur, qu'il fut extremement surpris d'entendre des cris d'enfans. Orphée qui en avoit ete surpris comme lui, supposa depuis que les enfans morts a la mamelle etoient placés a l'entrée des enfers :”

Continuo auditæ voces, vagitus et ingens,  
Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo;  
Quos dulcis vitæ exortes, et ab ubere raptos  
Abstulit atra dies, et funere mersit acerbo.

“En avançant Sethos se trouva dans un lieu enchanté qu'on appelloit l'Elisée. Ici comme le jour tomboit d'une hauteur de cent quarante pieds, il etoit affoibli; et l'ombre des arbres dont ce jardin etoit rempli l'affoiblissant encore, il sembloit que l'on ne jouissoit en plein jour que d'un clair de Lune. C'est ce qui fist naître a Orphée la pensée de donner a l'Elisée un Soleil et des astres particuliers :”

—Solemque suum sua sidera norunt.

Terrasson, however, declares, that the allegories of the Egyptians “sont peu de chose en comparaison des mysteres de Ceres institués a Eleusine sur le modele de ceux d'Isis.” Now Warburton, in the second book of his Divine Legation, while inculcating that all legislators have confirmed the belief in a future state of rewards and punishments by the establishment of mysteries, contends that the allegorical descent of *Æneas* into hell, was no other than an enigmatical representation of his initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries,



"which came originally from Egypt, the fountain head of legislation." On this system he attempts to show that the whole progress through Tartarus and Elysium is symbolically conformable to what has been ascertained concerning the mysteries. This appropriation of Warburton was first remarked by Cooper in his life of Socrates, where he says, "Warburton supposes the whole Sixth Book of the *Æneid* to be a description of the Eleusinian mysteries, which, though he lets it pass for his own, was borrowed, or more properly stolen, from a French romance, entitled the *Life of Sethos*." Gibbon, in his *Critical Observations on the Sixth Book of the Æneid*, where he completely refutes Warburton's hypothesis, remarks, that "Some have sought for the Poetic Hell in the mines of Epirus, and others in the mysteries of Egypt. As this last notion was published in

French six years before it was invented in English, the learned author of the *Divine Legation* has been severely treated by some ungenerous adversaries. Appearances, it must be confessed, wear a very suspicious aspect; but what are appearances," he sarcastically subjoins, "when weighed against his lordship's declaration, that this is a point of honour in which he is particularly delicate, and that he may venture to boast that no author was ever more averse to take to himself what belonged to another (Letters to a late Professor of Oxford)? Besides, he has enriched this mysterious discovery with many collateral arguments which would for ever have escaped all inferior critics. In the case of Hercules, for instance, he demonstrates that the initiation and the descent to the shades were the same thing, because an ancient has affirmed that they were different."

## CHAPTER XI.

Pastoral Romance—Arcadia of Sannazzaro—Diana—Astré—Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia.

WE have seen in a former volume that Pastoral Romance occupied a place among the comparatively few and uninteresting prose fictions of the ancients, and that one very perfect specimen of this sort of composition, the *Daphnis and Chloe* of Longus, was presented to the world in the earliest ages of romance. It was to be expected, accordingly, that when the taste for prose fiction became more prevalent than formerly, this easy and agreeable species of composition should not have been neglected. The very circumstance of so many works having appeared, of which the chief subject was turmoil and slaughter, led the mind, by a natural association, to wish to repose amid pastoral delights; and the beautiful descriptions of rural nature, which occasionally occurred in chivalrous romance, would suggest the idea of compositions devoted to the description of rustic manners and pastoral enjoyments. Another circumstance contributed perhaps to the formation of this

taste. Virgil was one of the poets whose names had been venerated even amid the thickest shades of ignorance, and his works, at the first revival of literature, became the highest subject of wonder and imitation. Of his divine productions, the *Eclogues* form a distinguished part; and when books and manuscripts were scarcely to be procured, were probably the portion of his writings most generally known. This, perhaps, contributed in no inconsiderable degree to form a taste for pastoral compositions, while the comparative easiness of the task induced the authors to write the whole, or the greater part, of them in prose, and frequently to combine with ruder materials the descriptions and images of that bard, who was the object of universal admiration.

During the middle ages, indeed, pastoral compositions had been frequent, but they partook more of the nature of the eclogue, or drama, than of romance. The vapid produc-



tions of the Troubadours contained, not the adventures of rural characters, but insipid or affected descriptions of nature. Among the works of the Trouveurs, there are some pastorals on the loves and adventures of shepherds and shepherdesses. In these there is often a good deal of nature and *naïveté* in the dialogue, but they differ little from each other. A poet goes out to walk, it is always in spring, and meets a beautiful shepherdess. Sometimes she calls in to her assistance the surrounding shepherds, who come up with all expedition, and put the lover to flight; but she more commonly accepts his propositions, of which the fulfilment is often very circumstantially described.

The *Ameto* of Boccaccio, which is a prose idyllium with poetical sprinklings, bears a strong resemblance to the pastorals of the Troubadours, but is more rich in rural description. The scene is laid in ancient Etruria: seven nymphs recount the story of their loves, and each story concludes with eclogues, which were the first in the Italian language. *Ameto*, a young hunter, presides over this amorous assembly, whose adventures, like those in all subsequent pastoral romances, refer to real characters, as has been explained in a long letter by Sansovino; but his discoveries and elucidations are little interesting, except those which relate to Fiammetta and her loves with Caleone, by whom Boccaccio himself is designated.

Boccaccio's Idyllium may be justly regarded as the prototype of the *Arcadia* of Sannazzaro, which was written towards the end of the 15th century, and which, though it cannot itself be considered as a pastoral romance, yet appears to have first opened the field to that species of composition. Like the *Ameto*, it consists partly of verse and partly of prose, a mode of writing which was adopted in all subsequent pastoral romances. Of these, indeed, the prose generally constitutes the largest proportion, and sonnets or eclogues are only occasionally introduced for the sake of variety, or as a species of interlude. The *Arcadia*, however, is about equally divided between prose and verse, the principal intention of the author, as appears from his own words, being to write a series of eclogues; and he seems to have intermixed the prose relations merely in

order to connect them. Nor does the *Arcadia* properly comprehend any story with a commencement and conclusion, which has always been considered essential to a romance. It entirely consists of a description of the employments and amusements of shepherds, whose actions and sentiments are generally well adapted to the simplicity of pastoral life. The author, who, under the names *Ergasto* and *Sincero*, is a principal character in the work, retires from Italy, on account of some love disappointment, to a plain on the summit of Mount *Partenio*, a beautiful region in *Arcadia*, possessed solely by shepherds. The pastoral inhabitants of this district meet together, and complain in alternate strains of the cruelty of their respective mistresses. They celebrate the festival of their goddess *Pales*, or assemble round the tomb of some deceased shepherd, and rehearse his praise. Under the name of *Massilia*, whom the author feigns to have been the most respectable Sibyl of *Arcadia*, he laments the death of his mother. Funeral games are performed at her sepulchre, and *Ergasto* distributes prizes to those who excel in the various contests. The work also contains many disguised incidents, which allude to the misfortunes of the author's patrons, the exiled princes of Naples. He also recounts his amours with the beautiful *Carminosina*, celebrates her charms under the name of *Amaranta*, and laments her death under that of *Phyllis*. At length he is one morning accosted by a lovely Naiad, under whose protection he is conducted to the bottom of the deep, where he sees the grottoes in which all the streams of the earth have their source, particularly the *Sebeto*. A submarine excursion of this kind was a favourite notion with the Italian poets, in imitation probably of the descent of the shepherd *Aristaeus* in the fourth *Georgic* (l. 360, &c.). It is introduced by Tasso in the 14th canto of the *Jerusalem*, where the two knights, who go in search of *Rinaldo*, are conducted by a magician into the bowels of the earth (st. 37, &c.). A similar device is employed by *Fracastoro* in the *Syphilis* (lib. ii.). After his aquatic survey, *Sannazzaro* emerges, by a route which is described in a manner so unintelligible as to be of no use to future travellers, near the foot of a mountain in Italy, and con-



cludes the work by his return to Naples, where he arrives much to his own satisfaction, and still more to that of the reader.

In the *Arcadia*, the eclogues are chiefly written in what are called *Versi Sdrucchioli*, the invention of which has by some been attributed to Sannazzaro. They consist, for the most part, of lamentations for the death of a shepherd, or cruelty of a shepherdess. Sometimes, too, the swains contend in alternate strains for a reward, which is a crook, a lamb, or an obscene picture.<sup>1</sup> These eclogues are, in a great measure, imitated from Virgil and other classics, with whose writings Sannazzaro had early rendered himself familiar, as a preparatory study to his admirable Latin compositions.

The pastoral dramas of Italy seem also to have suggested many incidents and fancies to the authors of pastoral romance. Thus, for example, Politian, in his *Orfeo*, which is the prototype of that elegant species of comedy, has employed the responsive Echo :—

*Che fai tu Echo mentre ch' io ti chiamo? — Amo.*

This conceit, of which there are some examples in the Greek *Anthologia*, and which Martial ridicules in his contemporary poets, has been frequently introduced by the Italian imitators of Politian, and with more or less absurdity by all pastoral romancers.

In the *Pastor Fido* there is the incident of a lover disguising himself as a female at a festival, in order to obtain a species of intercourse with his mistress, which, in his own character, he could not procure. This is a leading event in the principal subject of the *Astrea*, and is also introduced in one of the episodes of the

#### DIANA,

which was written in Spanish by George of Montemayor,<sup>2</sup> about the middle of the 16th century, and is the earliest regular romance of a pastoral description. The scene is laid at the foot of the mountains of Leon; but it is impossible to tell what is the period of the action, such is the confusion of modern manners and ancient mythology. The characters

<sup>1</sup> Il qual tiene nel suo mezzo dipinto il Rubicondo Priapo che strettissimamente abbraccia una Ninfa ed a mal grado di lei, &c.

alternately invoke the saints and fawns, and the destiny of one of the principal shepherdesses, who had been educated at a convent, is regulated by the oracles of Venus and Minerva.

Diana, the heroine of this work, was the fairest of those shepherdesses who inhabited the smiling meadows which are watered by the river Ezla. The young Sereno, who also dwelt on the banks of this stream, adored the beautiful Diana, who felt for him a reciprocal passion. They loved as in the age of gold, and their happiness was as complete as was consistent with innocence.

A felicity of this nature cannot continue long in a romance. Sereno, for some reason, which is not explained, is obliged to leave his native country, and departs after one of those interviews, the tenderness of which almost compensates the bitterness of separation. A melancholy period of absence is terminated by a more melancholy return, as he now finds his mistress in the arms of Delio, an unseemly shepherd, whom her father had compelled her to accept as a husband. The surrounding scenery reminds the lover of the happiness he had possessed, and of which he was now deprived. He sees his name interwoven with Diana's on the bark of the trees, and again views the fountain where they had pledged eternal faith.

While gazing on objects which excited such strong and painful emotions, he overhears the musical lament of the shepherd Sylvanus, a lover who had been rejected by Diana. He and Sereno, though formerly rivals, become friends from similarity of misfortune. Long they complain both in prose and rhyme of their unfaithful mistress; and, while thus employed, are accosted by a disconsolate shepherdess, who emerges from a thicket near the banks of the Ezla. They inform her of the cause of their grief, and she, in return, relates to them her story.

This damsel, whose name is Sylvania, had been accosted at the festival of Ceres by a beautiful shepherdess, with whom she formed a strong and sudden friendship. The religious ceremonies being concluded, the un-

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, No. 26.



known shepherdess confesses to Sylvania that she is in disguise, and is, in fact, the shepherd Alanio. Then this ambiguous character fell at the feet of Sylvania, professed the most ardent affection, and entreated the forgiveness of the fair. From that moment Sylvania conceived the warmest attachment to the person who was now imploring her pardon. This suppliant, however, was not the shepherd Alanio, as was pretended, but the shepherdess Ysmenia, who, in sport, had assumed the character of her cousin and lover Alanio, to whom she had a striking resemblance; but Alanio, being informed by his mistress of the adventure, particularly of the hopeless passion conceived by Sylvania, resolved to avail himself of the incident. He forsook Ysmenia, and attached himself to Sylvania, who readily transferred the affection she had formed for the false to the real Alanio. Ysmenia consoled herself for the loss of her lover, by coquetting with a shepherd of the name of Montano. Alanio, on hearing of this, whimsically resolved on recovering the affections of his former mistress. While thus employed, Montano resorted frequently to the cottage of Sylvania's father, in order to adjust with him their rights of pasturage; and, after a few visits, entirely forgot Ysmenia, and became deeply enamoured of Sylvania. Montano pursued Sylvania through the fields and forests; he, in turn, was pursued by Ysmenia, who was generally followed by Alanio. This *Brouillerie d'Amour* was suggested by an Italian pastoral drama, and reminds us of the loves of Pan and Echo in an Idyllium of Moschus:—

Pan sighs for Echo o'er the lawn,  
Sweet Echo loves the dancing fawn,  
The dancing fawn fair Lyda charms:  
As Echo Pan's soft bosom warms,  
So for the fawn sweet Echo burns;  
Thus all inconstant in their turns,  
All fondly woo, are fondly wooed,  
Pursue, or are themselves pursued.

In these circumstances Sylvania had come to reside with an aunt who lived on the banks of the Ezla, and had learned, since her arrival, that Montano had returned to the feet of Ysmenia, and had been espoused by that shepherdess, who, at the same time, had given her sister in marriage to Alanio.

I know not whether the audience unravelled this story at the first hearing, but they agreed to meet this intricate damsel every morning in a solitary valley, where they sighed without restraint, and indulged in long conferences on the misfortunes of love, and discussions on questions of gallantry. The debates of this amorous society are considerably diversified by the arrival of three nymphs, who are about to relate their adventures, when interrupted by the informal gallantry of three satyrs. This incident serves to introduce a portly shepherdess called Felismena, who, at a most critical moment, and unseen by all, transfixes these ardent lovers in succession with her arrows, and then bursting into view, commences her story in the following terms:—

“One day, shortly previous to my birth, a conversation took place between my parents concerning the judgment of Paris, in the course of which my mother complained that the apple had been refused to Minerva, and contended that it was due to her who united the perfections of mind to the beauties of person. In the course of the ensuing night Venus appeared to her in a dream, reproached her with ingratitude for the favours with which she had been loaded, and announced that the child, of which she was about to be delivered, would cost her the loss of life, and that her offspring would be agitated by the most violent passions which the resentment of Venus could inflict.

“My mother was much troubled at this cruel sentence, till, on the departure of Venus, Minerva appeared, and comforted her by an assurance that her child would be distinguished by firmness of mind and feats of arms.

“The first part of the threats of Venus was speedily accomplished, and my father, having early followed my mother to the tomb, I was left an orphan. Henceforth I resided at the house of a distant relative; and having attained my seventeenth year, became the victim of the offended goddess by falling in love with Don Felix, a young nobleman of the province in which I lived. The object of my affections felt a reciprocal passion, but his father, having learned the attachment which subsisted betwixt us, sent his son to court, with a view to prevent our union. Soon after his departure, I followed him in the disguise of a page, and



discovered on the night of my arrival at the capital, by a serenade I heard him give, that Don Felix had already disposed of his affections. Without being recognized by him, I was admitted into his service, and was engaged by my former lover to conduct his correspondence with the mistress, who, since our separation, had supplanted me in his heart. From the disguise in which I appeared, she conceived for me the warmest attachment, and, perceiving that her best hope of enjoying frequent interviews with me was to indulge the expectations of her lover, she transmitted answers to Don Felix, which, though not decisive, were more lenient and encouraging than formerly. Exasperated, at length, by the cold return which I was obliged to make to her advances, she gradually replied in less favourable terms to Don Felix. The distress, with which he was in consequence affected, moved my compassion, and one day, while pressing his suit with the lady more vehemently than usual, she made an explicit and violent declaration of her sentiments on my behalf; and, having retired to her cabinet, expired immediately, in consequence of the agitation into which she had been thrown. Don Felix disappeared soon after the news of her death had reached him, and during the last twelve-month I have roamed in the habit of a shepherdess from province to province in quest of the ungrateful fugitive."

A mistress serving her lover in capacity of a page, and employed by him to propitiate an obdurate fair one, is a common love adventure with the old novelists. There is a tale, founded on this incident, in the *Ecatommithi* of Cinthio, and another in *Bandello*, from which Shakspeare took the plot of *Twelfth Night*. These Italian novels were probably the origin of the above episode of Felismena, which seems, in turn, to have suggested the story of Protheus and Julia in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. It will be recollected, that while Protheus and Julia are mutually enamoured, the former is sent by his father from Verona to the court of Milan, to which he proceeds by sea. Soon after his arrival he falls in love with Sylvia, the duke's daughter. Julia follows him in disguise of a page, and discovers the estrangement of his affections by the evening music which he gives to the ear

of his new mistress. She then enters into his service, and is employed by him to propitiate the affections of her rival. The outline of this plot corresponds so closely with the Spanish romance, that there can be little doubt it was imitated by Shakspeare, who, besides, has copied the original in some minute particulars, which clearly evince the source from which the drama has been derived: As, for example, in the letter which Protheus addresses to Julia, her rejection of it when offered by her waiting-maid, and the device by which she afterwards attempts to procure a perusal (Act I. sc. II). In several passages, indeed, the dramatist has copied the language of the pastoral.

But while, in some respects, Shakspeare has thus closely followed the romance, he has departed from it in more essential incidents, in a manner (as usual with him) that rather injures than improves the story. In the *Diana*, the young man is sent on his travels by his father, in order to prevent an unsuitable marriage, but Protheus is despatched to Milan at the idle suggestion of a servant, and apparently for no other purpose than to give a commencement to the intrigue. Don Felix is indeed an unfaithful lover, yet his spirit, generosity, and honour, still preserve the esteem and interest of the reader; but the unprincipled villain, into whom he has been transformed in the drama, not only forsakes his mistress, but attempts to supplant his friend, and to supplant him by the basest artifice. The revival of affection, too, is much more natural and pleasing in the romance than in the play. In the former, Celia, the new flame of Felix, was then no longer in being, and his former mistress, as we shall afterwards find, had a fresh claim to his gratitude; but Protheus returns to Julia with as much levity as he had abandoned her, and apparently for no reason, except that his stratagem had failed, and that his fraud had been exposed. The story of Felismena seems also to have suggested the part of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* relating to the disguise of Euphrasia, which forms the principal plot of that tragedy.

But to return to the romance. Felismena having finished her story, the three damsels, whom she had rescued from the satyrs,



intimated that they were virgins consecrated to the service of Diana, and offered to conduct their companions to the temple of that goddess.

On the way thither they arrived at a delightful island in a lake, where, having entered a cottage, they discovered a shepherdess asleep in an elegant dishabille. This damsel, when awakened, insisted that it was her sighs that shook the trees of the valley, and her tears that fed the waters, by which the island was formed. It would have been contrary to pastoral etiquette to contest either the force of her sighs, or the abundance of her tears, for the singular exuberance of which she accounted by relating her story, of which the substance is, that she had been beloved by a father and son ; that one night she had given a rendezvous to the latter, during which he had been transfixed by an arrow from the hand of the jealous parent, who had been on watch, and had not discovered that this rival was his son ; but that as soon as he had recognised him he fell on the body of his child, and stabbed himself with a dagger. The lady did not interfere in the infliction of this voluntary punishment, but, terrified at the spectacle, she had fled from the spot, and had not stopped till she entered the cottage where she was discovered asleep by our travellers.

Belisa, for that was the name of the shepherdess, after being completely roused, agreed to accompany the nymphs of Diana to the temple of the goddess, where the whole troop arrived after a long journey. From this superb edifice, which was situated in a plain, surrounded by an almost impenetrable wood, there came forth a band of nymphs of inexpressible beauty, with a dignified priestess at their head, who entertained her visitors with much hospitality. They were introduced into a magnificent hall, adorned with figures of ancient heroes, distinguished by their generosity and valour. The statues of a long race of Spanish worthies were ranged after those of antiquity, and the praises of Spanish beauties were celebrated by Orpheus, who was there preserved in youth and song by the power of enchantment. An elegant entertainment followed, after which Felismena, at the request of the priestess, related a Moorish story, of which the spirit and interest form a

remarkable contrast to the languor of the pastoral part of the romance.

Ferdinand of Spain having conquered a considerable district of the kingdom of Grenada, appointed Rodrigo of Narvas to be Alcaide of the Moorish fortresses that had been recently acquired. One night this chief quitted his residence in Alora to inspect the enemy's frontiers. Having arrived at the banks of a stream, he passed with four of the knights who had accompanied him, and left other five at the ford. Those that remained behind soon heard a soft voice from a distance, and, placing themselves in concealment, they perceived, by the light of the moon, a young Moor, superbly mounted, and arrayed in splendid armour, who sung, as he advanced, the most amorous and impassioned verses in the language of Arabia. The Spanish knights attacked him on all sides. Though thus unequally opposed, the stranger had nearly overpowered his assailants, when the sound of the horn, a signal agreed on in case of any emergency, recalled Don Rodrigo, as yet not far distant, to the succour of his friends. He defied the Moor to a single combat, which he readily accepted, but, exhausted by his former encounter, he became the prisoner of the Christian leader. While conducting his captive to Alora, Rodrigo remarked his deep despondency, and begged to be entrusted with the cause of his affliction, which, he added, he could not attribute to any want of firmness to bear his misfortunes. In compliance with this request, the Moor informs his conqueror that he is the last survivor of the family of the Abencerrages, once so powerful and popular in Grenada. All his relatives having fallen under the displeasure of the king, and having been in consequence beheaded, he was sent, while a child, to Cartana, a fortress on the Christian frontier, of which the governor had been a secret friend of his father, and now brought him up as the brother of his daughter Xarifa. The early attachment of these young persons, and their change of behaviour on discovering that they were not related, is described with much truth and tenderness. But the happiness of the lovers was of short duration, as Xarifa was obliged to depart with her father to the government of Coyn, to which he had been appointed by



his sovereign. The day before he encountered the Spaniards, the Moor had received a billet from his mistress, informing him that her father had set out for Grenada, and that she awaited her lover in his absence. To this rendezvous accordingly he was on his way, when he had been detained by the attack of the Christians. Having related this story, Don Rodrigo granted the prisoner his freedom for three days, and he immediately set out to visit his mistress. The joy of the interview was complete, till he informed her of his adventures, and his obligation to return to captivity. Xarifa insisted on accompanying him to Alora, and they departed at day-break. Rodrigo, on their arrival, not only gave them their freedom, but wrote in their favour to the king of Grenada, who, though the request was made by the most formidable of his foes, agreed to pardon this last survivor of the race of the Abencerrages.

On the day which followed the recital of this story, the priestess of Diana, who knew by inspiration all the misfortunes of her guests, and had traced in her mind a plan for their future happiness, conducted them to the interior of the temple, and filled three cups from an enchanted stream. This beverage having been quaffed by Sereno, Sylvanus, and Sylvania, they instantly fell into a profound sleep, in which they remained for a considerable time. Sereno awaked in a state of most perfect indifference for his once much loved Diana, while Sylvanus and Sylvania, forgetting their former attachments, arose deeply enamoured of each other, and employed the most ardent expressions of affection. Some of the most entertaining scenes in Shakspeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* appear to have been suggested by the transference of love occasioned by the potion of the priestess.—See also *Pucelle d'Orleans*, c. 17.

Felismena, meanwhile, received a route from the priestess, and, reassuming her arrows, proceeded according to her itinerary instructions.

During her journey she entered the cottage of a shepherd, whom she discovered to be the lover of Belisa. On seeing him, Felismena conjectured that he had been pierced by an arrow as his mistress related, but that he had not died of the wound, that his father had been in too great a hurry in stabbing himself,

and his mistress in running away. In the course of conversation, however, she learned that though he had indeed been the rival of his father, and though it was true that his mistress had promised him a rendezvous, she had never made her appearance. A magician, it seems, by whom she was beloved, foreseeing the nocturnal interview, had raised the phantoms who played the seemingly bloody part related by Belisa, and the lover did not arrive at the appointed place till all had disappeared. After hearing this satisfactory explanation, Felismena directed him to the temple of Diana, and thus restored him to the arms of the astonished Belisa.

Meanwhile Felismena pursued her journey to the valley of the Mondego. In the vicinity of Coimbra, perceiving a knight beset by three enemies, she treated them as she had formerly done the satyrs, and discovered her much loved Don Felix in the person she had preserved. He returned with her to the temple of Diana, and was united to her at the same time that Sylvanus was married to Sylvania, and Belisa to her lover.

The romance concludes while Sereno yet remains in the state of indifference for Diana, into which the beverage of the priestess had thrown him. I have never seen the continuation, by Alonzo Perez, which consists of eight books; but in that by Gaspar Gil Polo, we are told that Sereno gradually recovered from his insensibility. Delio, the husband of Diana, likewise falls in love with a damsel who had recently arrived on the banks of the Ezla. One day he meets her alone in a wood, and pursues her with a criminal intention, but is so much overheated by the chase that he dies shortly after. No obstacle now remaining to the union of Diana and Sereno, their nuptials are celebrated as soon as the time appropriated for the mourning of the widow has expired.

Gil Polo having thus taken up the romance when the story was on the point of being concluded, has chiefly filled his work with poetry, and stories which are entirely episodic, but which are less complicated, and perhaps more interesting, than those of his predecessor Montemayor.

Cervantes condemns the continuation by Alonzo Perez, but bestows extravagant com-



mendation on that of Gaspar Gil Polo, which he seems to consider as superior even to the original by Montemayor. "And since we began," said the curate, "with the Diana of Montemayor, I am of opinion we ought not to burn it, but only take out that part of it which treats of the magician Felicia and the enchanted water, as also all the longer poems, and let the work escape with its prose, and the honour of being the first of the kind. Here is another Diana," quoth the barber, "the second of that name, by Salmantino (of Salamanca); nay, and a third too, by Gil Polo. Pray," said the curate, "let Salmantino increase the number of criminals in the yard, but as for that by Gil Polo, preserve it as charily as if Apollo himself had written it."

What is chiefly remarkable in the Diana of Montemayor, and its continuations, is the multitude of episodes with which they are encumbered, and the inartificial manner in which these are introduced. It has been supposed, indeed, that it was not so much the intention of Montemayor to write an interesting and well-connected romance, as to detail, under fictitious names, his own history, and the amours of the grandees of the court of Charles V.—"Diversas historias," as he himself expresses it, "de casos que verdaderamente han sucedido, aunque tan disfrazadas debaxo de nombre y estilo pastoral." Under the name of Sylvanus, in particular, he is supposed to have described an early amour of the duke of Alba, in whose service he spent a great part of his youth. Montemayor himself, we are told, was enamoured of a Spanish lady, whom, in his sonnets, he calls Marfida. After a return from a long journey he found her married, a disappointment which is represented by the union of Diana with Delio. This lady, it is said, lived to a great age in the province of Leon, and was visited there in the beginning of the 17th century, by Philip III. and his court, on their return from Portugal.

The Galatea of Cervantes, which was formed on the model of the Diana, is also reported to have been written with the intention of covertly relating the anecdotes of the age in which the author flourished, by a representation of the lives, the manners, and occupations of shepherds and shepherdesses, who inhabited the banks of the Tagus and Henares.

Thus, under Damon, Cervantes is understood to represent himself, and by Amarillis, the obdurate nymph he courted. This romance which, with the exception of a few unsuccessful poems, was the earliest work of its author, and was first printed in 1584, is now well known through the imitation of Florian. The adventures are not so extravagant as those of the Diana, but the style is greatly inferior, particularly in the poetical parts, which show that the author, as he himself expresses it in Don Quixote, was more conversant with misfortune than with the muse.<sup>1</sup> The episodes, as in its prototype, are interwoven in the most complicated manner. There are the same long discussions on the nature of love as in the Diana—equal pedantry, and a greater number of far-fetched conceits; all the heroes of fable and history are quoted, and the sun only shines with the light which he borrows from the eyes of Galatea:—

Ante la luz de unos serenos Ojos

Que al Sol dan Luz con que da Luz al Suelo.

The work consists of six parts, and though it be not completed, there is enough to bestow on Cervantes the reputation of having written one of the most tiresome as well as one of the most amusing books in the world.

As the Diana of Montemayor became the most popular romance which had appeared in Spain since the time of Amadis de Gaul, there were many imitations of it, besides the Galatea of Cervantes. Among these may be numbered *Los Dies Libros de Fortuna d'Amor*, by Pedro Frasso, printed in 1573, and mentioned in Don Quixote; the *Pastor de Iberia*, by Bernardo de la Vega: *Desenganno de Celos*, by Lope de Enciso, 1586, and the *Ninfas de Henarez*, in six books, Alcala, 1587, by Bernardo Gonzales, who, I see, confesses in his prologue, that he had just come from the Canary Islands, and had never seen the banks of the Henares.

These Spanish compositions resemble in nothing the pastoral of Longus (which has been regarded as the prototype of this species of romance), except the scene is laid in the country, and that the characters are shepherds and shepherdesses. Their authors have not rivalled the beauty and harmony of the rural

<sup>1</sup> Il ne dit pas ce qu' il pense, mais Je pense ce qu' il dit.



descriptions of the Grecian, and the simplicity of his characters and sentiments they have not attempted to imitate.

Subsequent writers unfortunately chose for their model the Spanish instead of the Grecian style of pastoral composition.

In imitation of Montemayor and Cervantes, whose romances had been so popular in the peninsula, Honore D'Urfé, a French nobleman, wrote his

### ASTRÉE,

a work, which, under the disguise of pastoral incidents and characters, exhibits the singular history of his own family, and the amours at the court of Henry the Great. The first volume, dedicated to that monarch, appeared in 1610, the second ten years afterwards, and the third, which is addressed to Lewis XIII., was given to the world four or five years subsequent to the publication of the second. The Duke of Savoy was depositary of the fourth part, which remained in manuscript at the death of the author, and was transmitted on that event to Mademoiselle D'Urfé. She confided it to Baro, the secretary of her deceased relative, who published it two years after the death of his master, with a dedication to Mary of Medicis, and made up a fifth part from memoirs and fragments, also placed in his hands. The whole was printed at Rouen, 1647, in five volumes. A modern edition has been published by the Abbé Souchai, in which many things, especially the dialogues, have been much curtailed.

The period of the action of this celebrated work is feigned to be the end of the 5th or beginning of the 6th century, and the scene the banks of the Lignon. Celadon was the most amiable and most enamoured of the shepherds who lived in that happy age and delightful region :<sup>1</sup> his passion was returned

by the beautiful Astrea, but at length the treachery and envy of the shepherd Semire inflame her mind with jealousy. She meets her lover, reproaches him with his perfidy, and then flies from his presence. Celadon casts himself, with arms across, into the river ; but his hopes of submersion, however well founded, are totally frustrated. He is thrown at some distance on the banks of the stream, near a grove of myrtles, where three nymphs come to his assistance, and conduct him to the castle of Issoura.

Astrea, who in concealment had perceived her lover precipitate himself into the stream, but had not foreseen such powerful effects from her reproaches, faints and falls into the water. She is rescued by the neighbouring swains, and conveyed to a cottage. There she is visited by Lycidas, the brother of Celadon, for whom a fruitless search is now made. Astrea pretends he had been drowned in attempting to save her, but her expressions of grief not answering the expectations of the brother, he upbraids her with indifference for the loss of so faithful a lover : Astrea pays a tribute to his virtues, but complains that he was a general lover, and in particular had forsaken her for Amynta. Lycidas now shrewdly conjectures that her jealousy has been the cause of his brother's death, and reminds her that Celadon, at her own desire, had made love to all the neighbouring shepherdesses, in order to conceal his real passion,—an arrangement which Astrea might have previously recollected, without any extraordinary powers of reminiscence. At the desire of Phillis and Diana, two of her companions, she is now induced to recount the progress of her affection for Celadon, and her whole history previous to the water scene ; a recital in which unfortunately she gives no marks of that defect of memory she had so lately betrayed.

Astrea begins her narrative by describing

the Lignon nothing but blacksmiths, forgemen, and iron-workers."

*Author*.—"What, in such a delightful country?"

*Rousseau*.—"It is full of nothing else but forges. It was this journey to Forez that undeceived me. Previous to that time not a year passed without my reading Astrea from beginning to end. I was perfectly familiar with all the characters in that performance. Thus knowledge robs us of our pleasures."

<sup>1</sup> This district was afterwards by no means remarkable for its pastoral beauty. In the preamble to St Pierre's *Arcadia*, which partly consists of a dialogue between the author and Rousseau, the latter replies with a smile, to some observation of the former, "Now, you mention the shepherds of the Lignon, I once made an excursion to Forez, on purpose to see the country of Celadon and Astrea, of which D'Urfé has drawn such charming pictures. Instead of amorous swains, I found on the banks of



with much minuteness the sensations, which, though only twelve years of age, she felt on first meeting with Celadon. Soon after this interview the festival of Venus was celebrated. On this occasion it was customary that four virgins should represent the judgment of Paris, in the temple of the goddess. At this exhibition, the description of which is taken from the tenth book of Apuleius, males were prohibited from being present, on pain of being stoned to death. Celadon, however, obtained admission in disguise of a virgin, and the part of Paris was luckily assigned to him. The three nymphs (one of whom was Astrea), competitors for the prize of beauty, were submitted to his inspection in the *costume* in which their respective excellencies could be most accurately discriminated. Celadon had thus an opportunity of bestowing the prize on Astrea, and afterwards acquainted her with the risk he had encountered for her sake. An incident similar to this occurs in the Pastor Fido, and fifth book of the Rinaldo. In the former, Mirtillo, disguised as his sister, mingles at the festival of Jupiter, among a train of nymphs, who contend which should give the sweetest kiss; Amarillis, the mistress of Mirtillo, is chosen the judge, and receives the caresses of her lover among those of her fair companions. In Rinaldo the incident is similar to that of the romance, except that in the former the audacious intruder is detected by his mistress Olinda—in the latter he reveals the secret himself. A corresponding event, it will be recollected, has been mentioned in the abstract of the Diana of Montemayor.

Spite of this happy commencement, the final union of Celadon and Astrea was retarded by the enmity subsisting between their parents; for the father of Celadon having become acquainted with the passion of his son, sent him to travel in Italy during three years. At his return his affection was unchanged, but Semire having placed Astrea in a situation whence she beheld his apparent courtship of Amynta, her jealousy and treacherous memory gave rise to the sudden catastrophe with which the pastoral commences, and which has been already related.

About this time Astrea derived no slight consolation from the death of her father and mother, as the distress she assumed for their

loss served as a cloak to her real grief, on account of the fate of Celadon: “ Presque au mesme temps elle perdit Alcé et Hypolite ses pere et mere—Hypolite pour la frayeur qu’ elle eut de la perte d’ Astrée, lorsqu’ ella tomba dans l’eau; et Alcé pour le déplaisir de la perte de sa chere compagne, *qui toutefois ne fut a Astrée un foible soulagement*, pouvant plaindre la perte de Celadon sous la couverture de celle de son pere et de sa mere.”

While Astrea was thus solaced by the demise of her parents, Celadon resided in the castle of Issoura, in the society of the nymphs by whom he had been succoured. Galatea, the most beautiful of these, and sister to the sovereign of the district, neglected for his sake her two former lovers, one of whom was Polemas, regent of the country in the absence of her brother; the other Lindamor, formerly her favoured admirer, who was now employed under his sovereign in a war against one of the neighbouring princes.

In spite, however, of this flattering preference, and the undeserved asperity with which he had been treated, the heart of Celadon still remained faithful to Astrea.

But as Galatea, according to the expression of D’Urfé, wished to whip him into affection, he found it necessary to escape from her lash. He was assisted in his elopement by Leonide, a nymph belonging to the court of Galatea, and instantly directed his flight to the banks of the Lignon. As his mistress, however, at parting, had forbidden him her presence, he fixed his residence in a wild cavern in the midst of a forest, and near the side of the stream. Here he resolved to pass the remainder of his days, solacing himself with the hope of beholding Astrea without being seen by her, and by raising a small temple, which, from an allusion to her name, he dedicated to the Goddess of Justice.

One day, while accidentally wandering through a meadow, he saw a number of shepherdesses asleep, and among these he remarked Astrea. Not daring to appear before her, he adopted the expedient of writing a billet, which he left on her bosom; on awakening she had a glance of her lover as he disappeared, but believed she had seen his spirit, and the letter, in which he informed her that his remains were deposited in the neigh-



bourhood, seemed to confirm this supposition.

The shepherds of Lignon formed a tomb for Celadon, to procure repose to his wandering shade, and shepherdesses gathered flowers, which they strewed on the imaginary grave. Three times the female druids called on his soul: the high priest also bade him adieu, and though they supposed he had been drowned, prayed that the earth might rest lightly on him.

Leonide, the nymph who had aided Celadon in his escape from the court of Galatea, although she knew that he was yet alive, assisted at this ceremony. She also frequently visited the recluse in his cavern, and on one occasion brought her uncle, the Grand Druid Adamas, who had become acquainted with Celadon at the castle of Issoura. This druid was much interested in his fate, and, wishing to draw him from solitude, tried to persuade him to disobey the commands of his mistress, and to court instead of avoiding her presence. The fastidious lover being inflexible on this point, Adamas next proposed that he should come to his house in disguise of a girl, and assume the character of his daughter Alexis, who had now resided for eight years with the druids in the caverns of Carnutes. This plan was readily embraced by Celadon, who had scarcely arrived at the mansion of Adamas, when all the neighbouring shepherdesses, and among the rest Astrea, came to pay their respects to the daughter of the Grand Druid. Astrea did not recognise her lover, but was overpowered by a secret and inexplicable emotion. She remained for some time with the false Alexis, and afterwards resided with him at her own abode, in the cottage of Phocion, where she had dwelt since the death of her parents. The account of the friendship of this pretended female and Astrea, their sentimental conversations, and the freedoms in which the former was indulged, form a considerable, but by no means an interesting portion of the romance.

While Celadon and Astrea were thus employed, Polemas (who, it may be recollected, was the admirer of Galatea), in order at once to accomplish his projects of ambition and love, raised an army, and besieged in the town of Marcilly the object of his passion, who, by

the death of her brother, was now sovereign of the district. Adamas commanded in the city on the part of Galatea; and Polemas, as preparatory to his attack, had secured the person of the false Alexis, whom he believed to be the daughter of Adamas, in order that, by placing her in front of the assailants, the besieged might not repel the attack. Astrea, on the day on which Alexis was to be seized, had accidentally put on the garb of her companion, and was in consequence conveyed to the camp of Polemas, where she was soon after followed by Celadon. Both were placed in the van of battle. Astrea, when discovered by the besieged, was drawn into town by a pulley, while Celadon, turning on the assailants, greatly contributed to the discomfiture of Polemas. Lindamor afterwards came to the succour of Galatea, and killed Polemas in single combat.

Notwithstanding his late military exploits, Celadon still remained undiscovered by Astrea, and they returned together to the solitary mansion of Adamas. At length, however, the nymph Leonide conducted Astrea to a grove, on pretence that she would there behold the shade of Celadon. After the pretended ghost-raiser had pronounced certain words of invocation, Alexis, who had accompanied them, fell at the feet of his mistress, and confessed the stratagem to which he had resorted. "Go," said the inexorable shepherdess, "and expiate by death the offence you have committed." Celadon begged her to specify what manner of death she wished him to undergo. She refused, however, to make any selection, and expressed a perfect indifference as to the mode of his death, provided it were speedily accomplished.

Being thus left to his own discretion, it occurred to Celadon that the most expeditious means of fulfilling the injunction of his mistress, was to repair to the lions which guarded the fountain of the Truth of Love, the work of the enchanter Merlin. These considerate animals, however, would not devour a person who was of pure heart, and who had never practised dissimulation. Celadon, in spite of his late disguise, was unfortunately regarded by them as being in this predicament, and was thus precluded from enjoying the local advantages to which he might have been



otherwise entitled. While in the dilemma occasioned by this unexpected abstinence on the part of the lions, Astrea reached the same spot as her lover. Repenting of her cruelty, she had come to the fountain with intentions similar to those of Celadon, but was much disconcerted to find herself caressed instead of being devoured, which was the more usual hospitality practised by the lions. Now, by inspecting the fountain, those who were in love saw their own image in the waters by the side of that of their mistress, if she was faithful; but if false, they beheld the figure of a more fortunate rival. Celadon and Astrea, while awaiting some favourable change in the sentiments or appetites of the lions, cast their eyes on the fountain, and each was instantly convinced of the sincerity of the other's attachment. Meanwhile the Grand Druid Adamas approached this singular scene, and addressed a fervent prayer to Cupid. After an alternation of light and darkness—of a storm which ruffled, and a calm which allayed the waters of the fountain, Cupid pronounced with proper effect an oracle, commanding the union of Celadon and Astrea. The lions, who had already evinced symptoms of approaching torpor, became the petrified ornaments of the fountain. Two faithful lovers, inspired with the intention of dying for each other, had now approached its magic waters, which was the destined term prescribed to the enchantment.

The above is the principal story of this celebrated pastoral, and the next in importance comprehends the adventures of Sylvander and Diana. Sylvander, a shepherd, unfriended and unknown, arrives on the banks of the Lignon, and sighs in secret for the beautiful Diana. This nymph was at the same time beloved by Philander, who resided in the neighbourhood in the disguise of a girl, and who perished in a combat with a hideous Moor, while defending the honour of his mistress. Like Celadon, Sylvander repairs to the fountain of the Truth of Love, and is commanded to be sacrificed by the oracle of gentle Cupid. While he is zealously preparing to undergo this operation, he is discovered to be the son of the Grand Druid Adamas, from whom he had been carried off in infancy,—an incident evidently borrowed from the *Pastor Fido*.

It is well known, that in the adventures of Celadon and Astrea, of Sylvander and Diana, the author has interwoven the history of his own family. The allusions, however, the intended application of the incidents, and the characters he means to delineate, have been matters of great dispute. This ambiguity arises partly from the author often representing one real character under two fictitious names, and at other times distributing the adventures of an individual among a plurality of allegorical personages; he also frequently alters the order of time, and comprehends within a few weeks incidents which occurred in the course of a number of years. We are informed by M. Patru, in a dissertation composed and published at the request of Huet, that while travelling through Italy he had visited M. D'Urfé, who then resided at Turin, and that the author had undertaken to explain to him the mysteries of the *Astrea*, if he would stay with him for some time on his return from the south of Italy. D'Urfé, however, died in the interval, and Patru was therefore only enabled to communicate what he was previously acquainted with, or what he had gleaned during his visit. Huet has farther developed the subject of D'Urfé, and his romance, in a letter addressed to M. Scuderi, which is dated 1699, and forms the twelfth of the dissertations published by the Abbé Tilladet; his information was collected from a Marquis D'Urfé, the last, I believe, who enjoyed the title, and Margaret D'Alegre, the widow of Charles Emanuel, nephew of the author of *Astrea*.

From these elucidations, it appears that Honore D'Urfé was of an illustrious family in France, that he was the fifth of six brothers, and was born near the spot where he has placed the scene of his *Astrea*. The barony of Chateumorand, which was in the neighbourhood of his father's possessions, had descended to Diana of Chateamorand. A marriage was projected between this lady and Anne D'Urfé, the eldest of the brothers. During the preparations for the nuptials, Honore D'Urfé became passionately enamoured of the destined bride, which being perceived by his father, he sent him to Malta, that his attachment might be no interruption to the intended union. On returning he



found his brother the husband of Diana, a situation he was ill qualified to possess, though he is said to have celebrated the beauty of his spouse in a hundred and forty sonnets. This nominal marriage was dissolved after a duration of ten, or, according to others, of twenty-two years. After this separation Diana was united to Honore, who now espoused her more from interest than love. He soon became disgusted with her, chiefly, it is said, on account of the large dogs by which she was constantly surrounded, and which she entertained at table, and admitted to bed,—a practice in which she dogmatically persisted in spite of the representations of her husband. He forsook her and her canine companions, and retired to Piedmont, where he lived in great favour with the Duke of Savoy, and composed his *Astrea*. Nor is it the least wonderful part of this strange history, that he should have employed his time in celebrating his adoration of a woman whom he had abandoned in disgust. Diana survived him many years. The nephew of the author informed Huet, that when he saw her, one could perceive she had been exquisitely beautiful, but even at an advanced age she idolized her charms, and, in order to preserve their remains, became extremely unsocial, shutting herself up from sun and wind, and only appearing in public under protection of a mask.

It is this family legend that the author is said to have transmitted to posterity in his pastoral romance. *Astrea* and *Diana* both figure *Diana of Chateaufort*, while he has exhibited his own character under the names of *Celadon* and *Sylvander*. *Sylvander* is a poor shepherd, because the author was a younger son; he sighs in secret for *Diana*, because he was obliged to conceal his passion on account of the marriage of his brother. *Celadon* throwing himself into the *Lignon*, represents his voyage to Malta, and his vows of knighthood. *Galatea* is Queen *Margaret of Valois*, and his detention in the castle of *Issoura*, refers to his having been taken prisoner during the league, by her guards, and conducted to her residence at the castle of *Usson*, where he made himself, it is said, very agreeable to her majesty; a circumstance to which some have attributed the dislike invariably expressed by *Henry IV.* to *D'Urfé*.

Under the disguise of *Alexis*, he typifies the friendship *Diana* felt for him as her brother-in-law, and the innocent liberties in which they indulged. *Philander*, attired in the dress of a girl, is the elder *D'Urfé*. A Moor whom he dies combating, is a personification of conscience, which at length compelled him to relinquish the possession of *Diana*, if it deserves that name. The deliverance of *Sylvander*, when on the point of being sacrificed, is his hope of espousing *Diana*. *Adamas* is the ecclesiastical power, which dissolved the union of the elder *D'Urfé*. The fountain of the Truth of Love is marriage, the final test of affection, and the petrified lions are emblems of the inconveniences of matrimony, overcome by faithful attachment.

Besides the two stories which represent the family adventures of the *D'Urfés*, there are thirty-three long episodes containing the history of shepherds and shepherdesses, whom the more important characters meet while tending their flocks. Some of these are resident in the vicinity, others have come from a distance by command of an oracle, to consult the Druid on their amorous doubts and misfortunes. This frequently introduces, in addition to the story, long discussions on questions of love, which are at length decided by some distinguished and impartial shepherd.

It is well known that in these episodes and disquisitions, the author has represented the gallantries and fashionable scandal of the court of *Henry IV.* Thus, in the story of *Daphnide*, that shepherdess is the *Duchess of Beaufort*; *Alcidon*, the Duke of *Bellegarde*; *Clarinte*, the Princess of *Conti*; *Amintor*, the Duke of *Maine*; *Alcyre*, the Count of *Sommerive*; *Thorismond*, *Henry III.*, and *Euric*, King of the *Visigoths*, his amorous successor. This information was communicated to *Patru* by *M. de Lamet*, a confidant of the Duke of *Maine*. With this key it is not difficult to comprehend the attachment of *Daphnide* and *Alcidon*—the intervening passion of *Euric*—the ambitious projects of *Daphnide*—the obstacles presented in the person of *Clarinte* to her elevation, and the various intrigues and devices by which she attempted to surmount them.

In another episode, *Celidée*, in order to cure her lover *Thamire* of his jealousy, disfigured



her countenance by tearing it with a pointed diamond, a heroic exertion which increased the attachment of her lover. This alludes to the neglect with which a French prince treated his lady; but, having been imprisoned for state affairs, she followed him into confinement. There she was attacked by the small-pox, which is the pointed diamond, but though deprived of her charms, her self-devotedness and sufferings at length recalled the alienated affections of her husband.

To such temporary topics and incidents of real life, the *Astrea* was chiefly indebted for its popularity. The remembrance of these having passed away, the work must rest on its intrinsic merits, which, it would appear, are not such as to preserve it from oblivion. The criticism made on the romance at the time it was published, was, that it contained too much erudition, and that the language and sentiments were too refined for those of shepherds. "Sylvander," says a French writer, "fût le seul qui eut étudié à l'école des Massiliens, et Je ne sçais seulement comment ils pouvoient l'entendre, eux qui n'avoient pas fait leurs cours chez les Massiliens." D'Urfé seems to have anticipated this last objection, as in his fanciful address to the shepherdess *Astrea*, prefixed to the first part of the work, he exculpates himself from this charge on the ground that his characters were not shepherds from necessity, but choice:—"Réponds leur ma Bergère! que tu n'es pas, ny celles aussi qui te suivent, de ces Bergeres necessiteuses qui pour gagner leur vie conduisent les troupeaux aux pasturages; mais que vous n'avez toutes pris cette condition que pour vivre plus doucement et sans contrainte: Que si vos conceptions et vos paroles estoient véritablement telles que celles des Bergeres ordinaires, ils auroient aussi peu de plaisir de vous écouter que vous auriez beaucoup de honte à les redire; et qu'outre cela la plupart de la troupe est remplie d'Amour, qui dans l'Aminte fait bien paroître qu'il change et le langage et les conceptions quand il dit—

Queste selve hoggi raggionar d'Amore  
S'udranno in nova guisa, e ben parassi,  
Che la mia Deità sia qui presente  
In se medesima, non ne suoi Ministri.  
Spirerò nobil sensi à rozzi petti;  
Radolcirò delle lor lingue il suono."

A chief defect in the *Astrea*, and what to a modern reader renders it insufferably tiresome, is the long and languishing conversations on wire-drawn topics. The design, too, which obtained the work a temporary fame, was adverse to its permanent celebrity, as the current of romantic ideas must have been checked by the necessity of squaring the incidents to the occurrences of existing society. The adventures of D'Urfé's own life, which are presented under the disguise of rural incidents, have nothing in common with the innocence of the pastoral character; and the amours at the court of Henry the Great were singularly at variance with the artless loves of shepherds, and fidelity of rustic attachments.

Another fault in the *Astrea*, and one which, with the exception of *Daphnis and Chloe*, is common to all pastoral romances, is the introduction of warlike scenes, in a work which should be devoted to the description of rural felicity. Tasso and other poets have been much, and perhaps justly applauded, for occasionally withdrawing their readers from the bustle of arms to the tranquillity and refreshment of vernal delights; but the author is not equally worthy of praise, who hurries us from pastoral repose to the tumult of heroic achievements.

The work, however, certainly possesses some intrinsic merit, as it was the admiration of many grave and distinguished characters, who would not have been merely enticed by the development of the fashionable scandal of the day. An extravagant eulogium is pronounced on the *Astrea*, by Camus, Bishop of Beley, in his *Traité de l'Esprit de François de Sales*. Huet used to read the work with his sisters, and he informs us they were frequently forced to lay down the book to give vent to their tears! At one period of his life, Rochefoucault (the author of the *Maxims*), passed his afternoons with Segrais, at the house of Madame La Fayette, where the *Astrea* was the subject of their studies. "Que je regrets que ce sont là des Fables," was the exclamation of a celebrated writer, when he had finished the perusal of the *Astrea*. Huet also mentions that it formed the basis of an epic poem of some reputation. An immense number of tragi-comic and pastoral dramas have likewise been formed from this work: In most of these the prose



dialogue has been merely versified, but in others the far-fetched conceits and exaggerated sentiments of D'Urfé have been aggravated. Thus, in *Les Amours d'Astrée et de Celadon*, the preservation of Celadon, when he threw himself into the Lignon, is thus accounted for :—

“ Mais le Dieu de Lignon pour lui trop pitoyable,  
Contre sa volonté le jetta sur le sable,  
De peur que la grandeur de feu de son amour,  
Ne changeât en guerets son humide séjour.”

I shall conclude the remarks on pastoral romance, by the analysis of the

#### ARCADIA

of Sir Philip Sidney, a work which was at one time much read and admired, not less perhaps on account of the heroic character and glorious death of its author, than its own intrinsic merit. This romance is sometimes named *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, as being written and dedicated to that “ subject of all verse,” who was the sister of Sidney : “ Your dear self,” says he in his dedication, “ can best witness the manner of his writing, being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence ; the rest by sheets, sent unto you as fast as they were done.” The work, which was left incomplete, was published after the death of Sidney, and from the mode of its composition, and not having received his last corrections, cannot be supposed to have all the perfection which the author could have bestowed, had the length of his life, according to the expression of Sir W. Temple, been equal to the excellence of his wit and virtues. As it was written in an age when the features of the ancient Gothic romance were not entirely obliterated, it is of a mixed nature, being partly of a heroic description ; and it also contains a considerable portion of what was meant by the author as comic painting. It is in the epic form, beginning in the middle of the action, and, by the usual contrivances, rehearsing, in the course of the work, those events by which its opening had been preceded.

Basilius, king of Arcadia, had, when already well stricken in years, married a young princess, Gynecia, daughter to the king of Cyprus. “ Of these two,” says the narrator, “ are

brought to the world two daughters, so beyond measure excellent in all the gifts allotted to reasonable creatures, that we may think that they were born to show that nature is no step-mother to that sex, how much soever some men (sharp-witted only in evil speaking) have sought to disgrace them. The elder is named Pamela ; by many men not deemed inferior to her sister : for my part, when I marked them both, methought there was (if at least such perfections may receive the name of *more*) more sweetness in Philoclea, but more majesty in Pamela : methought love plaid in Philoclea's eyes, and threatened in Pamela's : methought Philoclea's beauty only perswaded, but so perswaded as all hearts must yield ; Pamela's beauty used violence, and such violence as no heart could resist. And it seems that such proportion is between their minds : Philoclea so bashful, as though her excellencies had stolen into her before she was aware ; so humble that she will put all pride out of countenance ; in sum, such proceeding as will stir hope, but teach hope good manners. Pamela, of high thoughts, who avoids not pride with not knowing her excellencies, but by making that one of her excellencies to be void of pride ; her mother's wisdom, greatness, nobility, but (if I can guess aright) knit with a more constant temper.” (p. 10, ed. London, 1674).

Basilius, thus in want only of something to make him uneasy, determined to visit the temple of Delphos, where the following poetical response was furnished as a subject for his lucubrations :—

“ Thy elder care shall from thy careful face  
By princely mean be stolen, and yet not lost ;  
Thy younger shall with nature's bliss embrace  
An uncouth love, which Nature hateth most.  
Both they themselves unto such two shall wed,  
Who at thy bier as at a bar shall plead  
Why Thee (a living man) they had made dead.  
In thine own seat a foreign state shall sit,  
And ere that all these blows thy head do hit,  
Thou with thy wife adultery shall commit.”

Basilius, aghast at this puzzling denunciation, and endeavouring to prevent its fulfilment, retired from court to a forest in which he had built two lodges. In one of these he himself and his queen, with their younger daughter Philoclea, resided ; while in the other lived



Pamela, whom her father had committed to the guardianship of Dametas, a conceited, doltish clown, whose wife Miso, and daughter Mopsa, are described as perfect witches in temper and appearance. The humours of this family form what is meant as the comic part of the romance.

At this period, Pyrocles, son of Euarchus, king of Macedon, and his cousin Musidorus, prince of Thessaly, two princes, such as are to be found only in romance, were, after unexampled deeds of prowess, shipwrecked on the coast of Arcadia. The former of these heroes becomes enamoured of Philoclea, and the latter of her sister Pamela. With the usual fondness of the princes of romance for disguise, when their own characters would have better suited their purpose, Musidorus, as a shepherd, named Dorus, becomes the servant of Dametas, who had charge of the Princess Pamela; Pyrocles assumes the garb of an Amazon, with the name of Zelmane, and is thus admitted by Basilius an inmate of his lodge. The situation, however, of Pyrocles (now Zelmane), was less comfortable than might have been supposed: for, on the one hand, he was pestered by the love of Basilius, and on the other, by that of Queen Gynecia, who, seeing somewhat farther than her husband, suspected his sex, and would not leave him alone a single moment with Philoclea. The idea of a hero residing in a female garb with his mistress, and for a while unknown to her, which is a common incident in the *Argenis*, and other romances of the period, was perhaps originally derived from the story of Achilles: But that part of the *Arcadia* which relates to the disguise of Pyrocles, and the passion of the king and queen, has been immediately taken from the French translation of the 11th book of *Amadis de Gaul*, where Agesilan of Colchos, while in like disguise, is pursued in a similar manner by the king and queen of Galdap. It may not be improper here to mention the royal recreations, as giving a curious picture of the tenderness of ladies' hearts in the days of Queen Elizabeth. "Sometimes angling to a little river near hand, which, for the moisture it bestowed upon the roots of flourishing trees,

was rewarded with their shadow — there would they sit down, and pretty wagers be made between Pamela and Philoclea, which could soonest beguile silly fishes, while Zelmane protested that the fit prey for them was hearts of princes. She also had an angle in her hand, but the taker was so taken that she had forgotten taking. Basilius, in the mean time, would be the cook himself of what was so caught, and Gynecia sit still, but with no still pensiveness. Now, she brought them to see a sealed dove, who the blinder she was the higher she strove. Another time a kite, which having a gut cunningly pulled out of her, and so let fly, caused all the kites in that quarter," &c. &c., p. 58.<sup>1</sup>

It would be tedious, and could serve no good purpose, to analyze minutely the different books of the *Arcadia*. Musidorus was long counteracted in his plans by Dametas and his wife, and their ugly daughter Mopsa, to whom he was obliged to feign love, till, having at length discovered his rank to Pamela, he prevails on her to fly with him; but, after having gone a little way, they employ themselves in carving bad sonnets on the barks of trees. Meanwhile, the king and queen separately attempt to bring matters to extremity with Zelmane. Teazed by their importunities, this ambiguous character gives an assignation to each of them in a certain cave at midnight, and promises there to grant their wishes. As Zelmane had foreseen, Basilius does not recognize the queen amid the obscurity of the cave, and thus accomplishes the last and most mysterious part of the prediction of the Delphic oracle. Being athirst, he unwarily drinks a philtre, which Gynecia had brought with her to the cave, for the purpose of increasing Zelmane's love. This draught gives him the appearance of being poisoned. While their majesties were engaged in this cave adventure, the imaginary Zelmane embraces the opportunity of visiting Philoclea, in his true character of Pyrocles, Prince of Macedon, for the purpose of persuading her to fly with him; but after much discourse on the subject, both faint and fall asleep, so that in the morning the prince is discovered in male attire, in the chamber of Philoclea.

<sup>1</sup> Master Stow mentions similar *merry disports*, as forming the court amusements during the Danish

ambassador's reception and entertainment at Greenwich, in 1587.



Pamela and her lover are equally unsuccessful, and having lost much time in carving sonnets, they are surprised and brought back by soldiers.

The king still continued apparently in a lifeless state, and Gynecia, in despair accuses herself as the cause of his death. The utmost confusion now arises in Arcadia. In this posture of affairs, Euarchus, King of Macedon, accidentally arrives on the coast. Philanax, protector of Arcadia, appoints him umpire in the ensuing trial, and he accordingly sits on the royal throne, thus explaining another Delphic enigma. Gynecia is condemned to be buried alive, along with the body of her husband, whom she confessed having poisoned. The trials of the princes ensue, and long pleadings take place in the viperous style of Sir Edward Coke. Pyrocles is condemned to be thrown from a tower, and his cousin to be beheaded; and these sentences the Macedonian king affirms, though he now discovers that one of the prisoners is his nephew, and the other his son. All are in the uttermost distress, when Basilius, whose corpse was in court, awakes from the effects of the philtre, which had been only a sleep potion; and the oracle being thus fully accomplished, the two young princes are united to their mistresses.

Such is the outline of the story of the Arcadia. The heroic part of the romance consists in a detail of the exploits of Pyrocles and Musidorus, previous to their arrival in Arcadia; and in the description of a war carried on against Basilius, by his nephew Amphialus, whose mother had, at one time, craftily seized and confined the princesses. There are also some happy descriptions of jousts and tournaments. But the work is on the whole extremely tiresome, and its chief interest consists in the stately dignity, and often graceful beauty, of the language. "There is in the revolutions of taste and language," says Bishop Hurd (*Dialogues Moral and Political*, p. 157, ed. 1760), "a certain point which is more favourable to the purposes of poetry (and it may be added, of stately prose), than any other. It may be difficult to fix this point with exactness. But we shall hardly mistake in supposing it lies somewhere between the rude essays of uncorrected fancy on the one hand, and the refine-

ments of reason and science on the other. And this I take to have been the condition of our language in the age of Elizabeth. It was pure, strong, and perspicuous, without affectation. At the same time the high figurative manner, which fits a language so peculiarly for the uses of the poet, had not yet been controlled by the prosaic genius of philosophy and logic." At the period to which the bishop alludes, the Italians were the objects of imitation, as the French have been since; and, together with the stately majestic step of their productions, the style of Sidney and his contemporaries has a good deal of their turgidity and conceit. I might select a number of beautiful descriptions from the Arcadia, as for example, the much-admired passage in Book II., of Musidorus managing a steed. We have already seen the skill of the author in drawing characters; and the following is a striking portrait of an envious man. "A man of the most envious disposition that I think ever infected the air with his breath, whose eyes could not look right upon any happy man, nor ears bear the burden of any body's praise; contrary to the nature of all other plagues, plagued with others' well-being: making happiness the ground of his unhappiness, and good news an argument of his sorrow: In sum, a man whose favour no man could win, but by being miserable" (p. 130). This character has been imitated and expanded in the 19th number of the Spectator. The following description of Pamela sewing is a pretty fair specimen of the kind of conceits scattered through the work. "For the flowers she had wrought carried such life in them, that the cunningest painter might have learned of her needle, which, with so pretty a manner, made his careers to and fro through the cloth, as if the needle itself would have been loth to have gone fromward such a mistress, but that it hoped to return thitherward very quickly again, the cloth looking with many eyes upon her, and lovingly embracing the wounds she gave it: the shears also were at hand to behead the silk that was grown too short. And if at any time she put her mouth to bite it off, it seemed that where she had been long in making of a rose with her hands, she would in an instant make roses with her lips; as



the lilies seemed to have their whiteness rather of the hand that made them, than of the matter whereof they were made, and that they grew there by the suns of her eyes, and were refreshed by the most comfortable air which an unawares sigh might bestow upon them."

It has already been mentioned, that what is meant as the comic part of this romance, consists in satire upon Dametas, chiefly on account of his love of agriculture, and the absurdities of his wife and daughter. But it is by no means happy; nor has the author been more successful in what is designed as pastoral in his romance. A band of shepherds is introduced at the close of each book, as waiting on Basilius, and singing alternately on amorous and rural subjects. There is not probably in any other work in our language a greater portion of execrable poetry, than may be found in the *Arcadia*, and this, perhaps, less owing to want of poetical talent in the author, than to his affectation and constant attempts to versify on an impracticable system. At the period in which he lived, it was thought possible to introduce into English verse all the different measures that had been employed in Greek and Latin, and accordingly we have in the *Arcadia*, Hexameters, or, at least, what were intended by the author as such; Elegiacs, Sapphics, Anacreontics, Phalæciacks, Asclepiades, and, in short, every thing but poetry. The effect, indeed, is perfectly abominable.

Another affectation of the times, and to which in particular, Sir Philip Sidney was led by his imitation of Sannazzaro, was the adoption of all the various quaint devices which have been introduced into Italian poetry. We have the *Terza rima*, the *Sestina*, *Canzone*, *Sonnets* and *Echos*, the greater part of which, owing to the constraint to which they reduced the author, are almost, and some of them altogether, unintelligible. In the whole *Arcadia* I recollect only two poems which reach mediocrity, and these have at least the merit of being truly in the Italian style. The first is a Sonnet on a Lady Sleeping; the other is a Madrigal addressed to the Sun.

## I.

Lock up, fair lids, the treasure of my heart,  
Preserve those beams this age's only light;

To her sweet sense, sweet Sleep, some ease impart—  
Her sense too weak to bear her spirits might.  
And while, O Sleep! thou closest up her sight,  
(Her sight where love did forge his fairest dart),  
O harbour all her charms in easeful plight!  
Let no strange dream make her fair body start.  
But yet, O Dream! if thou wilt not depart  
In this rare subject from thy common right,  
But wilt thyself in such a seat delight—  
Then take my shape, and play a lover's part,  
Kiss her from me, and say unto her sprite,  
Till her eyes shine I live in darkest night.

P. 364.

## II.

Why dost thou haste away,  
O Titan fair! the giver of the day?  
Is it to carry news  
To Western wights, what stars in East appear,  
Or dost thou think that here  
Is left a Sun, whose beams thy place may use?  
Yet stay and well peruse  
What be her gifts that make her equal Thee;  
Bend all thy light to see  
In earthly clothes enclosed a heavenly spark:  
Thy running course cannot such beauties mark.  
No, no, thy motions be  
Hastened from us with bar of shadow dark,  
Because that Thou, the author of our sight,  
Disdain'st we see thee stain'd with other's light.

P. 368.

Such are the best productions of an author whom Sir William Temple, in the land that had already given birth to Shakspeare, and Spenser, and Milton, scrupled not to pronounce "the greatest poet and the noblest genius of any that have left writings behind them, and published in ours or any other modern language." (*Miscellanea*, part ii.) The *Arcadia* was also much read and admired by Waller and Cowley, and has been obviously imitated in many instances by our early dramatists. The story of Plangus in the *Arcadia*, is the origin of Shirley's *Andromana* or *Merchant's Wife*, and of *Cupid's Revenge*, by Beaumont and Fletcher. That part of the pastoral where Pyrocles agrees to command the Helots, seems to have suggested those scenes of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in which Valentine leagues himself with the outlaws. An episode in the second book of the *Arcadia*, where a king of Paphlagonia, whose eyes had been put out by a bastard son, is described as led by his rightful heir, whom he had cruelly used for the sake of his wicked brother, has furnished Shakspeare with the underplot concerning Gloster and his



two sons, in *King Lear*. There are in the romance the same description of a bitter storm, and the same request of the father, that he might be led to the summit of a cliff, which occur in that pathetic tragedy.

The *Arcadia* was also, as we learn from Milton, the companion of the prison hours of Charles I., whom that poet, in his *Iconoclastes*, reproaches with having stolen a prayer of Pamela to insert in his *Ikon Basiliké*. But

whether the author of that production actually fell into this inadvertence, or whether his antagonist, who seems to have believed in its authenticity, procured the interpolation of the passage, that he might enjoy an opportunity of reviling his sovereign for impiety, and of taunting him with literary plagiarism, has been the subject of much controversy among the biographers of the English bard. (See Symmons's *Life of Milton*, p. 278, &c.)

## CHAPTER XII.

Heroic Romance—Polexandre—Cleopatra—Cassandra—Ibrahim—Clelie, &c.

BOILEAU, and several other French writers, have deduced the origin of the heroic from the pastoral romance, especially from the *Astrea* of D'Urfé; and indeed Mad. Scuderi, in her preface to *Ibrahim*, one of her earliest productions, affirms that she had chosen the *Astrea* as her model. To that species of composition may, no doubt, be attributed some of the tamest features of the heroic romance, its insipid dialogues and tedious episodes; but many of the elements of which it is compounded must be sought in anterior and more spirited compositions.

Thus, we find in the heroic romance a great deal of ancient chivalrous delineation. Dragons, necromancers, giants, and enchanted castles, are indeed banished; but heroism and gallantry are still preserved. These attributes, however, have assumed a different station and importance. In romances of chivalry, love, though a solemn and serious passion, is subordinate to heroic achievement. A knight seems chiefly to have loved his mistress, because he obtained her by some warlike exploit; she formed an excuse for engaging in perilous adventures, and he mourned her loss, as it was attended with that of his dearer idol—honour. In the heroic romance, on the other hand, love seems the ruling passion, and military exploits are chiefly performed for the sake of a mistress: glory is the spring of the one species of composition, and love of the other;

but in both, according to the expression of Sir Philip Sidney, the heroes are knights who combat for the love of honour and the honour of love.

Much of the heroic romance has been also derived from the ancient Greek romances. The spirit of these compositions had been kept alive during the middle ages, and had never been altogether extinguished, even by the prevalence and popularity of tales of chivalry. The *Philocopo* of Boccaccio, said to have been composed for the entertainment of Mary, natural daughter of the King of Naples, bears a close resemblance to the Greek romance. This work is taken from a French metrical tale of the 13th century, which has been imitated in almost all the languages of Europe (Ellis's *Metrical Romances*, vol. iii.). In Boccaccio's version of this story, Florio, Prince of Spain, falls in love with Blancafior, an orphan, educated at his father's court. To prevent the risk of his son forming an unequal alliance, the king sells the object of his attachment to some Asiatic merchants, and hence the romance is occupied with the search made for her by Florio, under the name of *Philocopo*. The work is chiefly of the tenor of the heroic romance, but it presents an example of almost every species of fiction. Heathen divinities appear in disguise, and the rival lover of Blancafior is transformed into a fountain: stories of gallantry are related at the court of Naples,



which Florio visits, and the account of the gardens and seraglio of the Egyptian emir resembles the descriptions in fairy and oriental tales.

Theagenes and Chariclea was translated into French by Amyot, in 1547, and ten editions were printed before the end of the 16th century. The story of Florizel, Clareo, and the Unfortunate Ysea, a close imitation of the Clitophon and Leucippe, written originally in Castilian, was translated into French in 1554, and soon became a popular production.

On the decline of romances of chivalry, it was natural to search for some species of fiction to supply their place with the public. The spiritual and pastoral romances were not sufficiently entertaining nor abundant for this purpose, and the sale of ten editions of the work of Heliodorus was a strong inducement to attempt something original in a similar taste. In pursuance of this new object, the writers of that species of fiction, which may be peculiarly entitled Heroic Romance, resorted in search of characters partly to classical and partly to Moorish heroes.

The adoption of the former may, perhaps, have been owing to Amyot's translation of Plutarch, in which there were many interpolations savouring of the author of "*La vie et faits de Marc Antoine Le Triumvir et de sa mie Cleopatre, traduité de l'historien Plutarque pour tres illustre haute et puissante dame Mad. Française de Fouez dame de Chateaubriand.*"

It was the well-known History of the Dissensions of the Zegrís and Abencerrages that brought the Moorish stories and characters into vogue in France. The Spanish writers attribute this work to a Moor, who retired into Africa after the conquest of Granada. His grandson, who inherited the MS., gave it, they say, to a Jew; and he, in turn, presented it to Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Count of Baylen, who ordered it to be translated by Genes Peres del Hita. This account, however, is extremely apocryphal. The knowledge, indeed, displayed by the author, concerning the tribes and families of the Moors settled in Granada before the conquest of that city by the monarchs of Castile, renders it probable that Genes del Hita consulted some Arabian

MS. on the subject of the Moorish contentions; but, on the other hand, the partiality to the Christian cause, which runs through the whole work, proves that the pretended translator was the original author of the greater part of the composition, and that it was first written in the Spanish language.

This production may be regarded as historical in some of the leading political incidents recorded, but the harangues of the heroes, the loves of the Moorish princes, the games and the festivals, are the superstructure of fancy. In these, however, national manners are faithfully preserved, and in the romance of Hita more information is afforded concerning the customs and character of the Moors than by any of the Spanish historians.

The work commences with the early history of Granada, but we soon come to those events that preceded and accelerated its fall—the competitions for the sovereignty, and dissensions of the factions of the Zegrís and Abencerrages. Of these the former race sprung from the kings of Fez and Morocco; the latter descended from the ancient princes of Yemen. In this work, and all those which treat of the factions of Granada, the Zegrís are represented as a fierce and turbulent tribe. On the other hand, the Abencerrages, while their equals in valour, are painted as the most amiable of heroes, endowed with graceful manners and elegant accomplishments. The Zegrís, however, remained faithful to the cause of their country, while the Abencerrages, by finally enlisting under the banners of Ferdinand, were the chief instruments of the downfall of Granada. The Spanish monarch, availing himself of the Moorish dissensions, and of the valour of Don Rodrigo of Arragon, Grand Master of the Order of Calatrava, vigorously attacked Granada, and finally accomplished its ruin by means of the Abencerrages, who revolted to him in revenge for the unheard of cruelties exercised on their race by one of their native princes. This work also presents the strange, though not uncommon, spectacle of a nation expiring in the midst of revelry and amusement; the gates of its capital were assaulted by a foreign enemy—the energy of the people was employed, and their valour wasted in internal war, but nothing could interrupt the course



of festivity. Every day brought fresh disaster without, and new bloodshed within ; but every vacant hour was devoted to carousals, and to idle and romantic gallantry. In the work of Hita there are also introduced a number of short poetical romances. Each festival and combat furnishes the author with a subject for these compositions ; some of which are probably the invention of Hita, while others apparently have been founded on Arabian traditions.

This romance, or history, was first printed at Alcala in 1604, and soon became extremely popular : there was no literal translation till the late one by M. Sané, but a close imitation, published early in the 17th century, is the origin of all those French romances which turn on the gallantries and adventures of the Moors of Granada, as the *Almahide* of Scuderi, &c.

But though the works above-mentioned may have supplied incidents to the writers of heroic romance, many of the pictures in that, as in every other species of fiction, have been copied from the manners of the age. That devotion, in particular, to the fair sex, which exalted them into objects rather of adoration than of love, and which forms the chief characteristic of the heroic romance, was a consequence of the peculiar state of feeling and sentiment in the age of Louis XIV. Never was prince so much an object of imitation to his people as that monarch ; and hence his courtiers affected the same species of gallantry, practised by a sovereign, who paid to beauty a constant and respectful homage, and whose love, if less chivalrous than that of Francis I., or less tender than that of Henry IV., had more *appearance*, at least, of veneration and idolatry. “ C’est avec éclat et somptuosité,” says Segur (*Les Femmes*, vol. ii. p. 156) “ qu’ il (Louis XIV.) offre des hommages à la beauté. Forcé d’ aimer il fait une Divinité de l’ objet qu’ il exhause, pour ne pas se rabaisser à ses propres yeux, et eleve la Femme devant laquelle il se prosterne. Nous l’ imitons tous à la ville et à la cour. Aucun roy n’ a donné le ton comme celui-ci, n’ a, comme lui influé sur la conduite, et presque sur les pensées. Notre galanterie a pris la teinte de respect pour le Sexe dont le monarque nous offre l’ exemple.”

We find, accordingly, that whether classical or Moorish heroes be introduced, the general tone of the heroic romance is nearly the same. But, besides that exalted species of love which no severity could chill, and no distance diminish, for which no sacrifice was too great, and no enterprise too perilous, we always meet with the same interminable length—the same minute descriptions—the same tedious dialogue—the same interruptions to the principal narrative by stories interwoven with it, which perplex and distract the attention. The introduction of long and constantly recurring episodes, a wretched fecundity, which is a proof of real barrenness, is the great fault of the heroic romance.—“ Eh mon Dieu,” said a celebrated philosopher, “ si vous avez de quoi faire deux Romans, faites en deux, et ne les melez pas pour les gater l’ un l’ autre.”

I shall now, according to my plan, present the reader with a short account of some of the most celebrated of the *Romans de longue Haleine*, as they have been termed, which may be vulgarly translated *long-winded romances*.

Nearly all of these were written by three authors, Gomberville,<sup>1</sup> Calprenede, and Madame Scuderi. The

#### POLEXANDRE

of Gomberville, which was first published in 1632, and enjoyed a high reputation in the age of Cardinal Richelieu, was the earliest of the heroic romances, and seems to have been the model of the works of Calprenede and Scuderi. This ponderous work may be regarded as a sort of intermediate production between these later compositions and the ancient fables of chivalry. It has, indeed, a closer affinity to the heroic romance ; but many of the exploits of the hero are as extravagant as those of a paladin or knight of the Round Table. In the episode of the Peruvian Inca, there is a formidable giant, and in another part of the work we are introduced to a dragon, which lays waste a whole kingdom. An infinite number of tournaments are also interspersed through the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 27.



volumes. In some of its features Polexandre bears a striking resemblance to the Greek romance; the disposition of the incidents is similar; as in the Greek romance, the events, in a great measure, arise from adventures with pirates; and the scene is chiefly laid at sea or in small islands, or places on the sea coast.

Polexandre, the hero of this work, was king of the Canary Islands, and reigned over them soon after the discovery of America. In his early youth he had the good fortune to be captured by a piratical vessel fitted out from Britany, and being carried to France, he there received an education superior to what could have been reasonably expected in the seminaries of the Canary Islands.

After an absence of some years, Polexandre set out on his return to his own country. In the course of his voyage he approached the coast of Africa, where he learned that the hardy Abdelmelec, son of the powerful Muley Nazar, emperor of Morocco, had proclaimed a splendid tournament, with a view of procuring a general acknowledgment from all the heroes and sovereigns on earth, that Alcidiana, queen of the Inaccessible Island, was the most beautiful woman in the universe. The African prince, it is true, had never beheld Alcidiana, but he had fallen in love with this incomparable beauty by seeing her portrait. This notion of princes,—for it is a folly peculiar to them,—becoming enamoured of a portrait, the original of which is at the end of the world, or perhaps does not exist, seems to be of oriental origin. Thus, in the *Mille et un jours*, there is the story of a prince, who, after a long search, discovers that the picture he adored was a representation of one of the concubines of Solomon.

The prince of the Canaries proceeds to the tournament, with the intention of contesting the general proposition laid down by Abdelmelec concerning the beauty of his mistress; but the view of the portrait makes such an impression on his heart, that so far from disputing the pre-eminence of Alcidiana, he combats Abdelmelec, in order to make him renounce his passion and his picture.

Having possessed himself of this trophy, Polexandre now returns to the Canary Islands, the declared admirer of Alcidiana. On his

arrival there he finds that his sister had been lately carried off by corsairs. The King of Scotland, it is true, was in chase of the ravishers, but Polexandre did not conceive that his own exertions could, on that account, be dispensed with. While engaged in the pursuit of the pirates, he is driven by a storm into the mouth of a river in an unknown island. On disembarking, he finds that the country is delightful, and its inhabitants apparently civilized. A shepherd offers to conduct him to the nearest habitation: while on their way they observe a stag spring forth from a forest of cedars and palms, with an arrow in its shoulder. Instantly Polexandre hears the sound of a horn, and beholds a chariot drawn by four white horses. This conveyance was open, and was in shape of a throne. It was driven by a beautiful woman, in the garb of a nymph, while another, still more resplendent, and who carried a bow and arrows, occupied the principal seat in this hunting machine. Though Polexandre enjoyed but a transient glance, he discovers, from the resemblance to the portrait, that this is the divine Alcidiana. The passion, of which he had already felt the first emotions, takes full possession of his soul, and he already begins to make ingenious comparisons between his own situation and that of the wounded stag, and mentally reproaches this animal with insensibility in avoiding the transport of being pierced by the arrows of Alcidiana. Polexandre, accordingly, resolves to remain on the island, and to disguise himself as a shepherd, that he might enjoy frequent opportunities of beholding the object of his passion. An old man, with whom he resided, informs him of every thing connected with the history of the queen. Among other topics, he mentions a prediction made soon after her birth, which declared that she was liable to the hazard of being united to a slave, who was to come from the most barbarous nation of Africa, but which, at the same time, promised the greatest prosperity to the kingdom, if she could resolve to accept him for a husband. In order to avoid the risk of this unworthy alliance, the princess remained, for the most part, immured in her palace. Polexandre, however, has occasional opportunities of seeing her, and at length enjoys the good fortune of



preserving her life while she was engaged in her favourite amusement of hunting. This procures him admission to the palace, and his access to the presence of the queen is still farther facilitated by his suppressing a rebellion which had broken out in the island. He gradually insinuates himself into her confidence; and as she had discovered his rank from the rich gifts he bestowed on her attendants, she abates somewhat of that *hauteur*, which it seems was the distinguishing feature in her character. The romance is now occupied with the struggles that arise between this feeling and love, which are fully detailed in a very tiresome chapter, entitled *Histoire des divers sentimens d'Alcidiane*. At length Polexandre leaves the princess, in order to recover one of her favourite attendants who had been carried off by a Portuguese corsair. He soon sails to such a distance as to lose sight of the Island of Alcidiana, which had received from enchantment the unfortunate property, that when once out of view it could never be regained.

The remaining part of the romance is occupied with the adventures of Polexandre in his fruitless attempts to *make* this invisible territory, and in his extirpation of those daring princes who aspired to the love of its queen. For this Beauty was beloved by all the monarchs on earth: even those who could not pretend to her in marriage proclaimed themselves her admirers; and knights, though at the extremity of the globe, rigorously abstained from looking on any woman after having viewed the portrait of Alcidiana. One would think even a princess must be somewhat whimsical to take umbrage at such remote courtship, nevertheless Alcidiana had been grievously offended. She had been shocked that the Khan of Tartary, the Prince of Denmark, and the Emperor of Morocco, had paid her the most distant devotion. To adore Alcidiana, though her residence was inaccessible, and her worshippers at the distance of a thousand miles, was a deadly offence for all but Polexandre. This prince, meanwhile, traverses different parts of the globe in quest of the Inaccessible Isle, but his adventures are chiefly laid in Africa, and nearly one half of the romance is occupied with Moorish episodes.

At length Polexandre arrives at a country on the banks of the Niger, the monarch of which was wont to despatch to the temple of the Sun, an annual cargo of persons who were to be ranked among the slaves of that divinity. Polexandre begs leave to accompany this mission in the disguise of a slave, as he knew that Alcidiana sent thither a yearly offering. By this device he regains the Inaccessible Isle in the vessel that brought the tribute, and which invariably steered the right course by enchantment. On his arrival at the island of his mistress, he finds it overrun by a Spanish army, which had been sent under the Duke Medina Sidonia, for the purpose of subjugating the Canary Islands; but the armada having been driven on the Inaccessible Isle, the land forces had meanwhile attempted its conquest. Polexandre, who is at first unknown, gains some splendid successes over the Spaniards, and a belief is spread through the island that the African slave alluded to in the prediction, and whose alliance with their princess was to be the forerunner of so much prosperity, had at length arrived. The approach of a second Spanish fleet, and the increasing dangers of the kingdom, induce the inhabitants to insist that Alcidiana should fulfil the prophecy. By the importunities of her people, she is at length forced to fix a day for the performance of the nuptial ceremony. Polexandre, to the infinite joy of the princess, discovers himself at the altar, and the same day witnesses the destruction of the Spanish armies, the conflagration of their fleet, and the union of Polexandre with Alcidiana.

The above is an outline of the chief materials of this romance, but the events are arranged in a totally different order from that in which they have been here related. Like the writers of Greek romance, the author,

— In medias res

Non secus ac notas auditorem rapit,

which makes a great part of his work more unintelligible than it would otherwise be, from our consequent ignorance of the circumstances and situation of the principal characters, and the allusions contained in their tedious conversations.

A sketch of this romance was first published by the author under the title of *L'Exil de Polexandre*. It was afterwards enlarged to



its present bulk of five volumes, each of which contains about twelve hundred pages, and to every volume an adulatory dedication is prefixed. One of these addresses contains a hint of the author having some political meaning in the romance. There is nothing, however, of this sort apparent, except a general wish to depreciate the character of the Spaniards and the lower orders of society.

Gomberville, the author of *Polexandre*, also commenced the story of

#### LE JEUNE ALCIDIANE,

the son of *Polexandre* and *Alcidiana*, which was subsequently finished by *Mad. Gomez*. Soon after the birth of this prince, a hermit, who piqued himself on inspiration, revealed that he was destined to slay his father. The romance is occupied with the means adopted to prevent the completion of this prediction.

Gomberville, besides his *Polexandre* and *Le Jeune Alcidiene*, is also the author of two romances, of no great merit or celebrity, entitled *Caritée* and *Cytherée*.

Of the writers of the description with which we are now occupied, *Calprenede*<sup>1</sup> is certainly the best. The French critics are divided concerning the superiority of his *Cleopatra* or *Cassandra*, but to one or other the palm of the heroic romance is unquestionably due.

#### CLEOPATRA

was first published in parts, of which the earliest appeared in 1646, and when completed, the whole was printed in twelve vols. 8vo. The capacity of the author in extending his work to such unmerciful length need not be wondered at, as it, in fact, comprehends three immense, and, in a great measure, unconnected romances, with about half a dozen minor stories or episodes, which have little relation to the three main histories, or to each other. Indeed the plan of the author is nearly the same as if *Richardson*, instead of forming three novels of his *Pamela*, *Sir Charles Grandison*, and *Clarissa*, had chosen to interweave them in a single work, giving the name of

any one of them to the whole composition. That such a scheme has been completely adopted in the romance now before us, will appear from the following sketch.

The shades of night had not yet given place to the first blushes of day, when the disconsolate *Tyridates*, awakened by his cruel inquietude, and unable to await the approaching night, left his solitary mansion to refresh his languishing frame, and breathe his amorous thoughts on the shore of *Alexandria*.

After some time he perceives a great conflagration on the sea, which he concludes must proceed from a burning vessel, and he is naturally led to compare the flames to those by which he is himself consumed. "Ah, devouring flames!" exclaims he, "ye act your part with less power and cruelty than mine. If ye be not soon quenched, the materials will fail that feed your fury, but the flames find in my soul perpetual fuel; I have no hope of relief from a contrary element, no prospect of the end of such a substance as may ever burn without consuming."

This ardent lover continued his rhapsody till the approach of light, when he saw coming towards land a plank, on which was seated the Queen of *Ethiopia*, with one of her maids of honour, while her prime minister was swimming behind, and impelling it to the shore. *Tyridates* plunged amid the waves to their assistance, and, bidding the prime minister, who was nearly exhausted, provide for his own security, took his place at the plank, by which means all parties arrived safe on land.

The chief of the two ladies resembled *Venus*, newly sprung from the womb of *Thetis*, and would have been mistaken by *Tyridates* for a sea-goddess, had he not seen the waves use her too rudely to be her subjects. On reaching shore, the first concern of the lady was to faint, and the waiting-woman, who, as *Puff* says, must always do as her mistress, and who on the present occasion had the same title to a swoon, instantly fell at her feet. When they had recovered, they were conducted, along with *Eteocles*, the person who attended them, to the solitary mansion of *Tyridates*, which stood in the immediate vicinity.

After the queen had enjoyed a few hours

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 28.



of repose, she was waited on by her host, whom she entreated to relate the story of his life. Tyridates declared that this would oblige him to disclose what he had resolved to hold secret as long as his breast would contain it, and that even by the acknowledgment of his name, he would incur the danger of his life. Waving, however, these considerations, he informed her that he was brother to Phraates, King of Parthia. That prince ascended the throne by the murder of his father, and all the rest of his family, with the exception of Tyridates, who escaped to a neighbouring court, and afterwards settled in Judaea, whose king, Herod, was the avowed enemy of Phraates. The story of Mariamne, as it is related in Josephus, is the basis of the adventures of Tyridates. A coolness subsisted on the part of this princess towards her husband, as he had recently put to death her father Alexander, her uncle Antigonus, her two grandfathers; and her brother Aristobulus. Tyridates fell desperately in love with Mariamne, but although she preserved her fidelity to Herod inviolate, Salome, that monarch's sister, in revenge for an ill-requited affection she had conceived for Tyridates, and from hatred to Mariamne, instilled the most fatal suspicions into the mind of her brother. It thus became necessary, both for the safety of Mariamne and his own, that Tyridates should seek refuge in some other country. He had first repaired to Rome, but as the splendour and gaiety of that capital ill accorded with the frame of his mind, he had betaken himself to the solitary dwelling which he now inhabited.

In return for this communication, the attendant of the Queen of Ethiopia commences the history of the life of his mistress, which is one of the three main stories in the work. It relates to her amours with Cæsario, son of Julius Cæsar, and Cleopatra, who had been believed dead through the Roman empire, but had, in fact, escaped into Ethiopia after the ruin of Marc Antony.

About this time, Coriolanus, prince of Mauritania, arrived at the mansion of Tyridates, and his story may be considered as the principal one in the romance, as his mistress, Cleopatra, gives name to the work. This prince was son of the celebrated Juba, and,

after the death of his father, was educated at Rome. There he became enamoured of Cleopatra, the daughter of the Queen of Egypt and Marc Antony; but disgusted by the preference which Augustus showed to his rival Tiberius, he one day seized an opportunity of running his competitor through the body on the street, and then fled into Mauritania. He there raised a revolt among his father's subjects, and having successively defeated the Roman commanders who were sent against him, was invested by the inhabitants with his paternal sovereignty. After his coronation he set out *incognito* for Sicily, where the court of Augustus then was, in order to have a private interview with his mistress; but as she reproached him for perfidy, and avoided his presence, instead of receiving him with the kindness anticipated, he was, in consequence, thrown into a violent fever. Understanding, on his recovery, that Cleopatra had accompanied Augustus and his court to Egypt, he departed for Alexandria, in order to obtain an explanation of her expressions and conduct.

The romance now returns to the Queen of Ethiopia, who, during her residence with Tyridates, was forcibly carried off by pirates, but was afterwards rescued by Cornelius Gallus, the prefect of Egypt, and conducted to Alexandria. In the palace of the prefect she met with Elisa, who was daughter of Phraates, King of Parthia, and, like herself, had been delivered by a Roman vessel from pirates. The story of Elisa, and her lover Artabanus, a young adventurer, who afterwards proves to be the son of the great Pompey, is the third grand narrative of this production. Artabanus is the most warlike and most amorous of all the heroes of romance, and for the sake of Elisa he conquers for her father immense empires in Asia, almost by his individual prowess.

It is impossible to follow the princes and princesses through the various adventures and vicissitudes they encounter; suffice it to say, that at length they are all safely assembled at Alexandria, where Augustus also arrives with his court, and a reconciliation takes place between Coriolanus and Cleopatra. The designs of the emperor to obtain the Princess Elisa for his favourite Agrippa, and Cleopatra for Tiberius, to the prejudice of Artaban and Coriolanus, induce these lovers to excite an



insurrection against the Roman power. They storm the castle of Alexandria, but are there besieged by Augustus, and soon reduced to extremity. The emperor, however, terrified by a menacing apparition of Julius Cæsar, which about this time had unexpectedly appeared to him, consents to pardon the princes, and unites them to the objects of their affections.

This conclusion of the romance is as unsatisfactory as any conclusion of such a work could be. We are vexed that the principal characters should owe their lives and happiness to the bounty of a capricious tyrant, by whom they had been previously persecuted. Had they forced him to agree to terms, or made their escape from his power, the winding up of the whole would have been infinitely more agreeable. The great fault, however, of the romance, is the prodigious number of insulated histories, which prevent the attention or interest from fixing on any one object. Cleopatra is different from all heroic romances in this, that the others have one leading story, and a number of episodes; but in the work with which we have just been engaged, though there is no want of episodes, there are three main stories, which have no intimate connexion with each other, and which claim an equal share of the reader's attention. Indeed, that part of the romance which relates to the adventures of the nominal heroine, is neither the longest nor best managed part of the work. Her lover is a less interesting character than either Artaban or Cæsario: he stabs his rival on the street, excites his father's subjects to revolt, and then abandons them to the mercy of the Romans.

In the innumerable stories of which the romance is compounded, there is, I think, but little variety. Thus in all of them incomparable princes are eternally enamoured of divine princesses, to whom they pay a similar species of adoration, and for whose sake they perform similar exploits. In the character of the heroines there is little discrimination. The only distinction is in the species of personal perfection attributed to each of them; thus the majestic graces of the Ethiopian princess are contrasted with the softer charms of Elisa. The vast number of lovers attached to every one of the heroines fatigues the

attention and perplexes the story. Besides inferior slaves, each of the chief female characters has three or four important and passionate admirers. Cleopatra is beloved by Tiberius, Coriolanus, and Artaxus. Candace, the Ethiopian queen, by Cæsario, Tyribasus, Gallus, and the pirate Zenodorus. Elisa, by Artaban, Tigranes, and Agrippa.

Of this romance the basis is historical, but few of the incidents are consistent with historical truth. Yet they do not revolt the credence of the reader, because they are not in contradiction to known historical facts, and are such as might have occurred without being noticed in the authentic chronicles of the period. We can easily conceive that Cæsario, instead of being murdered, as was intended by his enemies, had escaped into Ethiopia, and that Pompey had a posthumous son, who served in the army of an Asiatic monarch. The revolt in Mauritania, however, and the coronation of Coriolanus by his father's subjects, is an exception to this remark. It is well known that the son of Juba owed his elevation to the favour of Augustus, and hence the event recorded in the romance is instantly rejected as absurd and fictitious.

The speeches and dialogues, though often prolix, frequently rise to eloquence, and paint in admirable language the emotions of dignity and tenderness. The sentiments are not numerous, and are generally far-fetched and exaggerated.

Cleopatra, like most of the other heroic romances of this period, has given rise to several English dramas, as *The Young King*, by Mrs Behn; *Gloriana, or the Court of Augustus Cæsar*, by Lee; and several others, all which partake of the fustian and forced elevation of the work from which they are derived.

Calprenede, the author of *Cleopatra*, also wrote

#### CASSANDRA,

a romance which possesses nearly similar beauties and defects with his former production.

In this work we are informed that on the banks of the river Euphrates, not many miles from Babylon, two strangers alighted from



their horses. He who, by the richness of his arms, and the respect the other bore him, appeared to be the master, commences the business of the romance by lying down upon the grass, and burying all disquiets that troubled him in a profound sleep. From this state of forgetfulness he is roused by the clang of arms, occasioned by a combat between two knights. He interposes his good offices by successively attacking the combatants, one of whom at length makes his escape. The black arms and sable plume of him who remains, witnessed the grief that was in his heart, but our mediator was ignorant of his name and the cause of his discontent, till he declared that he was the unfortunate Lycimachus, and that the person whom he had so recently combated was Perdiccas, the murderer of the fair Statira, widow of Alexander the Great, and of her sister the divine Parisatis. On hearing this intelligence, the person to whom it was communicated instantly fell on his sword, whence Lycimachus conjectured that he took a peculiar interest in the fate of one or other of these beauties. The wound, however, not proving mortal, he is carried to the house of one Polemon, in the neighbourhood, and, while recovering at leisure, his squire agrees to favour Lycimachus with the detail of his master's adventures. His name was Oroondates, and his birth the most illustrious in the world, as he was the only son of the great King of Scythia. A mortal enmity and perpetual warfare subsisted between that sovereign and Darius. In one of these wars, of which the seat was on the Araxis, Prince Oroondates, who was then entering on his military career, made a nightly excursion, with a few chosen friends, into the Persian camp, and having entered a tent, beheld, by the light of a thousand tapers, a troop of ladies, among whom were the Great Queen and Statira, who was daughter of Darius, and the most perfect workmanship of the gods. The prince retired with protestations of respect, but carried away with him a love, which induced him, when the armies retired into winter quarters, to repair in disguise, and under the assumed name of Orontes, to the court of Persepolis, "where she," says the romance, "who had charmed him in a slight field habit, by the light of a few torches in the terrors of

night, and apprehensions of captivity, now appeared in broad day, covered with jewels, and seated on a stately throne, all glorious and triumphant." The pretended Orontes was treated with much kindness by the Persian monarch, with the warmest friendship by his son Artaxerxes, but with much severity by the princess Statira, and with a partiality he did not covet, by her cousin Roxana.

Intelligence now arrived of the Scythian invasion, and the approach of Alexander to the Granicus. It was resolved in the cabinet of Persepolis, that the latter should be opposed by the king in person, and that Artaxerxes, assisted by experienced commanders, should repel the inroad of the Scythians. Oroondates now revealed his real name and quality to Artaxerxes and the Princess Statira, by whom his suit was now more patiently listened to, and, preferring the interests of his love to those of his country, he resolved to accompany and aid Artaxerxes in the ensuing campaign. In return, Artaxerxes could not do less than spare the Scythians in the ensuing battle; and he, in consequence, repelled an attack so feebly, that he was overpowered, and believed dead by Oroondates, who, having been cured of the ten wounds he had received in this combat, and the Scythians having drawn off their forces, returned to Persia, to serve Darius in his wars against Alexander—contests well fitted to become the subject of romance. The overthrow of the Persian empire is the most magnificent subversion recorded in the annals of history. The monarchy of Alexander had been split into insignificance before it was destroyed, and the Roman power had melted to a shadow before it entirely disappeared; but Darius fell "from his high estate" when the throne of Cyrus shone with undiminished lustre. There is something, too, so august in the Persian name, something so chivalrous in the character of Alexander, and so miraculous in his exploits, that the whole is calculated forcibly to awaken those sentiments of admiration, which it is a chief object of fiction and romance to inspire. We have a splendid description previous to the battle of Issus of the Persian army, of which the *materiel* consisted of the sacred fire, borne on silver altars by three hundred and sixty-five magi, clothed in purple robes—the



car of Jupiter and the Horse of the Sun—golden chariots which conveyed the queen and princesses, and the Armamaxa of the royal household. Previous to the battle, Darius addressed his army in an animated harangue ; in which he conjured them by their household gods, by the eternal fire carried on their altars, by the light of the sun and memory of Cyrus, to save the name and nation of the Persians from utter ruin and infamy, and to leave that glory to their posterity which they had received entire from their ancestors. The romance is now occupied with the events of the campaign, the stratagems resorted to by Oroondates to obtain interviews with Statira after her captivity, and the jealousy excited in her breast, and in that of her lover, by the artifices of Roxana.

After the death of Darius, Oroondates returned to Scythia, where, on account of his treason, he was imprisoned by his father, and the chief administration of affairs entrusted to a stranger, called Arsaces, a young man of unknown birth, but of distinguished wisdom and valour. Arsaces, however, having fallen into disgrace, Oroondates, at the end of two years, was released, and appointed to command an army, which was destined to repel an inroad of the Macedonians. This expedition was eminently successful, and, among the Greek prisoners, Oroondates discovered an eunuch, the confidant of Statira, who removed all his former suspicions as to the fidelity of that princess, but informed him, that while impressed with a conviction of his inconstancy, she had accepted the hand of Alexander. On receiving this information, the Scythian prince set out for Susa, where he had an interview and explanation with his mistress. Thence he departed for Babylon, where Alexander then held his court, in order to force him, by single combat, to resign Statira ; and on his journey to that city he had met with Lysimachus on the banks of the Euphrates, as related in the beginning of this romance.

Lysimachus now commences the recital of his adventures, which, besides his warlike exploits in the service of Alexander, consist of his love for Parisatis, the sister of Statira ; his rivalry with Hephestion, who obtained the princess by the interest of Alexander ; the renewal of his hopes subsequent to the death

of that favourite ; and his pursuit of Perdiccas (by whom he imagined the Persian princesses had been destroyed), till the period when his combat with that traitor had been interrupted by Oroondates.

Thalestris, Queen of the Amazons, being at this time in search of a fugitive lover, whose delicacy had been wounded by her well-known embassy to Alexander, also arrives on the banks of the Euphrates, and prefaces the narrative of her adventures by a recapitulation of the Amazonian history from the time of the Trojan war.

Berenice, the sister of Oroondates, who had been carried off by Arsacomes, one of her father's courtiers, is rescued by her brother from the power of this forward lover about the same period, and conducted to the royal receptacle on the banks of the Euphrates.

On the first arrival of Oroondates at the house of Polemon, two young women, in simple habits, who were called Cassandra and Euridice, resided in that habitation, but had subsequently disappeared. They were mistaken for common boarders by the princes ; and their presence and departure excited no peculiar interest, till the arrival of a confidant of the Persian family, who came to acquaint Oroondates that the former of these ladies was the stately Statira, and the latter the peerless Parisatis. The names of Cassandra and Euridice, which they assumed, were those they had borne while in a private station, but which they had changed when their father mounted the throne of Persia, for the more regal appellations of Statira and Parisatis. These princesses had not, as was believed, fallen victims to the fury of Roxana and Perdiccas, but had been preserved by a stratagem of that general, who was enamoured of Statira, from the rage of Roxana ; they had been secreted by him in the house of Polemon, but had afterwards been carried away by his orders, on pretence of a regard to their safety, before they could obtain an opportunity of disclosing their real quality to Oroondates.

For the deliverance of these princesses, preparations are now made by Oroondates, Lysimachus, and their adherents, against the party of Roxana and Perdiccas. In this contest, the chief support of the enemy was Arsaces.



At length, however, this commander is severely wounded in single combat with Oroondates, and brought prisoner to the camp, where, during his recovery from his wound, he is discovered to be no other than Artaxerxes, Prince of Persia, who was believed by Oroondates and the rest of the world to have perished in the battle with the Scythians. The adventures of Artaxerxes, which occupy a great part of the romance, have too close a resemblance to those of the principal character. He had only fainted from loss of blood, and his life had been saved by a noble Scythian. After he had been cured of his wounds, he fell in love with Berenice, Princess of Scythia. On account of the hostility of his family to that of his mistress, he assumed the name of Arsaces, and under this appellation he had performed distinguished services for her country, while his father's empire was subjugated by Alexander. The princess at length being carried off by that lover, from whose violence her brother had rescued her, Arsaces set out in quest of his mistress. In the neighbourhood of Babylon he learned that Berenice was detained in the camp of Lysimachus, and not knowing that her brother (who at this time did not bear the name of Oroondates) was there also, he had naturally enough associated himself to the party of Perdiccas. Now, however, he feels eager to co-operate with dearer friends, who, animated by this assistance, proceed to the assault of Babylon, where they understand that the Persian princesses are confined. In the first attack Oroondates is unfortunately taken prisoner. Perdiccas requires that he should be put to death, in order to aid his suit with Statira. This is opposed by Roxana, who demands, for similar reasons, that Statira should be sacrificed: an internal commotion arises between their partizans, and the besieging army, availing itself of this dissension, bursts into Babylon, discomfits both parties, and rescues the Scythian hero and Persian princess in the very crisis of their fate. Lysimachus is united to Parisatis. Oroondates, accompanied by his divine Statira, departs for Scythia, to the throne of which he had succeeded by the recent demise of his father. The Persian prince, renouncing for ever the name of Artaxerxes, espouses Berenice under

that of Arsaces: being subsequently assisted with forces from his brother-in-law, he conquered many provinces, and became that great Arsaces who founded the empire of the Parthians.

Rousseau informs us, in his *Confessions*, that in his boyhood much time was devoted by him to the perusal of heroic romance. He acknowledges that he and his father used to sit up during night poring over the adventures of Oroondates, till warned by the chirping of the swallows at their window of the approach of day. Accordingly, many incidents of the *Heloise* may be traced in these romances. Thus in the *Cassandra*, with which we have been last engaged, there may be found the origin of that part of the *Heloise*, where St Preux, while his mistress lies ill of the small-pox, glides into the room, and approaches the bed, that he too may partake of the infection and danger. Julia, when she recovers, is impressed with a confused idea of having seen him, but whether in a vision or in reality she cannot determine.

Calprenede, who wrote *Cassandra*, is also author of the romance of

#### PHARAMOND,

which turns on the love of that founder of the French monarchy, for the beautiful Rosemonde, daughter of the King of the Cimbrians, and the cruel necessity to which he saw himself reduced, of defending his dominions from her invasions, and those formidable rivals she had raised up against him, who were enamoured of her beauty, or ambitious of the Cimbrian throne.

In this hostility she long, but unwillingly, persevered, on a scruple of conscience, as it had been enjoined her on his death-bed by her father, who was the mortal enemy of Pharamond; but she is at length pacified, on its being discovered that that monarch was not, as supposed, the murderer of her brother—a belief which formed the chief cause of enmity.

Lee's tragedy of *Theodosius*, or the *Force of Love*, is taken from the romance of Pharamond. The story of *Varanes*, which forms the chief plot of that drama, may be found in the third book of the third part.

The whole romance, however, which bears



the title of Pharamond, is not the work of Calprenede: He only wrote the seven first volumes, the remaining five having been added by Pierre de Vaumoriere, who was also author of several romances of his own, as *Le Grand Scipion*, which is reckoned the best of his productions.

It is no doubt extraordinary, that such tedious and fantastic compositions as the romances of Gomberville and Calprenede should have attained the popularity they so long enjoyed; but while readers could be procured, we cannot wonder that authors were willing to persist in this species of writing; for, as Dr Johnson has remarked, "when a man by practice had gained some fluency of language, he had no farther care than to retire to his closet, let loose his invention, and heat his mind with incredibilities. A book was thus produced without the toil of study, without knowledge of nature, or acquaintance with life."

The most voluminous writer of heroic romance is Madame Scuderi,<sup>1</sup> of whose numerous productions the earliest is

#### IBRAHIM, OU L'ILLUSTRE BASSA,

first published in 1635. The hero of this romance was grand vizier to Solyman the Magnificent. In his youth he had been enamoured of the princess of Monaco, but, overwhelmed with grief by a false report of her infidelity, he had abandoned Genoa, his native country, and having travelled through Germany, embarked on the Baltic Sea to seek an honourable death in the wars of Sweden. This design met with an interruption which no one could have anticipated—he was captured by the Dey of Algiers, who happened to be cruising in the Baltic in person! In recompence, however, of this disaster, his subsequent good fortune was equally improbable; for having been sold as a slave at Constantinople, and condemned to death on account of an attempt to recover his freedom, the daughter of Solyman happened to be at her window to witness the execution, and being struck with the appearance of the prisoner, not only procured his pardon, but introduced him to her father,

who, after conversing a long while on painting, mathematics, and music, appointed him Grand Vizier. In this capacity he vanquished the Sophy of Persia, and made prodigious havoc among the rebellious Calenders of Natolia. At length, however, having learned that the rumour concerning the inconstancy of the princess was without foundation, he returned to Italy, and offered the proper apologies to his mistress; but, as he had only a short leave of absence, he again repaired to Constantinople. Thither he is shortly afterwards followed by the princess, of whom Solyman at first sight becomes so deeply enamoured, that soon after her arrival, the alternative is proposed to her of witnessing the execution of Ibrahim, or complying with the desires of the sultan. In this dilemma, the lovers secretly hire a vessel and sail from Constantinople. Their flight, however, is speedily discovered; they are pursued, overtaken, and brought back. The sultan now resolves to inflict both the punishments of which he had formerly left an option: the princess is condemned to the seraglio, and Ibrahim receives a visit from the mutes. Suddenly, however, Solyman recollects having on some occasion sworn that, during his life and reign, Ibrahim should not suffer a violent death. On this point of conscience the Grand Seignior consults the mufti, who being a man *plein d'esprit et de finesse*, as it is said in the romance, suggests, that as sleep is a species of death, the grand vizier might be strangled without scruple during the slumbers of the sultan.

At an early period of the evening, Solyman went to bed with a fixed design of falling asleep, but spite of all his efforts he continued wakeful during the whole night, and, having thus time for reflection, he began to suspect that the mufti's interpretation of his oath was less sound than ingenious. The lovers were accordingly pardoned, and a few days after were shipped off for Genoa, loaded with presents from the emperor.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the conclusion of this romance, particularly the decision of the mufti, and the somniferous attempts of his master. The sudden revolution, too, in the mind of the latter, by which alone the lovers are saved, is produced by no adequate cause, and is neither natural nor inge-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 29.



nious. The whole romance is loaded with tedious descriptions of the interior of Turkish and Italian palaces, which has given rise to the remark of Boileau, that when one of Mad. Scuderi's characters enters a house, she will not permit him to leave it till she has given an inventory of the furniture. An English tragedy, entitled *Ibrahim, or the Illustrious Bassa*, is founded on this romance. It was written by Elkanah Settle, and printed in 1677.

No hero of antiquity has been so much disfigured as Cyrus by romance. Ramsay, we have already seen, has painted him as a pedantic politician. The picture represented in the

#### ARTAMENES, OU LE GRAND CYRUS,

of Mad. Scuderi, bears still less resemblance to the hero of Herodotus, the sage of Xenophon, or the king announced by the Hebrew prophets. The romance of which the Persian monarch is the principal character, is the second written by Mad. Scuderi, and, like *Ibrahim*, passed on its first publication under the name of her brother.

Astyages, King of Media, perplexed by the disastrous horoscope of his grandchild Cyrus, ordered him to be exposed on a desert mountain. Being preserved, however, and brought up by a shepherd, he soon distinguished himself among his companions, over whom he exerted a sort of regal authority. By the confession of the shepherd, it was discovered that his foundling is the grandson of Astyages; but the magi being clearly of opinion that the sway he assumed over his companions, was the royal usurpation portended by the planets, Cyrus was sent for to court, and in this portion of the romance some babyish anecdotes are related in the manner of Xenophon.

The constellations again became malignant, and Cyrus was banished to Persia. From this country he set out on his travels, bearing the assumed name of Artamenes, and under this appellation visited different towns of Greece, particularly Corinth, where he was magnificently entertained by the sage Periander and his mother. On his return to Asia he passed into Cappadocia, over which his uncle Cyaxares, son of Astyages, then reigned

in right of his queen. As this monarch, like his father, was understood to have a superstitious terror for Cyrus, the young prince was obliged to appear incognito. It was in a temple of Sinope, the capital of Cappadocia, that he first beheld Mandane, the daughter of Cyaxares, and heroine of the romance, who came with her father and his magi to return thanks for the demise of Cyrus, who had been believed dead since his departure from Persia. Although engaged in this ungracious office, Cyrus became deeply enamoured of the princess, or, as the romance expresses it, was amorously blasted by her divine apparition.

Cyrus was thus induced to offer his services to Cyaxares, in the contest in which he was then engaged with the King of Pontus, who had declared war, because he was refused the Princess Mandane in marriage. A soldier of fortune, called Philidaspes, but who afterwards proves to be the King of Assyria, also served in the Cappadocian army. He, too, was in love with Mandane, and between this adventurer and Artamenes there was a perpetual rivalry of love and glory.

Meanwhile, intelligence arrived from old Astyages, that, in order to preclude all chance of the Persian family ever mounting the throne of Media, he had resolved again to marry, and that on reflection, the only suitable alliance appeared to him to be Thomyris, Queen of Scythia. Artamenes is despatched by Cyaxares on an embassy, to propitiate this northern potentate. On his arrival, the queen unfortunately falls in love with him, which defeats the object of his mission, and he with difficulty escapes from her hands. He finds, on returning to Cappadocia, that his rival, the King of Assyria, had succeeded in carrying off Mandane, and had conveyed her to Babylon. Artamenes is placed at the head of the Cappadocian army, and marches against the capital of Assyria. The town is speedily invested, but when it is on the point of being captured, the king privately escapes, and, taking Mandane along with him, shuts himself up in Sinope. Thither Artamenes marches with his army, but on arriving before its walls, he finds the city a prey to the flames. Artamenes on seeing this, begins to expostulate with his gods, taxing them in pretty round terms with cruelty and injustice. The cir-



cumstances were, no doubt, perplexing, but scarcely such as to justify the absurdity and incoherence manifested in his long declamation. At length, however, he derives much consolation by reflecting, that if he rush amid the flames, his ashes will be mingled with those of his adored princess; a commixtion which, considering the extent of the conflagration, was more to be desired than expected. One of his prime counsellors perceiving that he stood in need of advice, now gives it as his opinion, that it would be most expedient to proceed in the very same manner they would do if the town were not on fire. The greater part of the army is accordingly consumed or crushed by the falling houses, but Cyrus himself reaches the tower where he supposed Mandane to be confined. Here he discovers the King of Assyria, but Mandane had been carried off in the confusion by one of the confidants of that prince. The rivals agree for the present to postpone their difference, and unite to recover Mandane. The subsequent part of the romance is occupied with their pursuit, and their mutual attempts to rescue the princess from her old lover, the King of Pontus, under whose power she had fallen. We have also the history of the jealousy of Mandane, and the letters that pass from the unfortunate Mandane to the unfaithful Cyrus, and from the unhappy Cyrus to the unjust Mandane.

At length Cyrus succeeds in rescuing his mistress from the King of Pontus, and, as the Assyrian monarch was slain in the course of the war, he has no longer a rival to dread: his grandfather and uncle having also laid aside their superstitious terrors, he finally espouses the Princess Mandane at Ecbatana, the capital of Media.

The episodes in this romance are very numerous, and consist of the stories of those princes who are engaged as auxiliaries on the side of Cyrus or the King of Pontus. This is the romance which has been chiefly ridiculed in Boileau's *Les Heros de Roman*. Diogenes addressing Pluto, says, "Diriez vous pourquoi Cyrus a tant conquis de provinces et ravagé plus de la moitié du monde? C'est que c'étoit un prince ambitieux. Point de tout; c'est qu'il vouloit delivrer sa princesse qui avoit été enlevée—Et savez vous combien elle a été

enlevée de fois? Non. Huit fois—voilà une beauté qui a passé par bien des mains."

### CLELIE HISTOIRE ROMAINE

is a romance also written by Mad. Scuderi, though it was originally published under the name of her brother. It consists of ten vols. 8vo, of about eight hundred pages each, and was printed at Paris in 1656.

This work enjoyed for some time considerable reputation, but has finally acquired, and perhaps has deserved, the character of being the most tiresome of all the tedious productions of its author. It comprehends fewer incidents than the others, and more detail relating to the heart, and is filled with those far-fetched sentiments so much in fashion in the early age of Lewis XIV.

But what has chiefly excited ridicule in this romance, is the *Carte du pays de Tendre* prefixed: in the map of this imaginary land, there is laid down the river *D'Inclination*, on the right bank of which are situated the villages of *Jolis vers*, and *Epitres Galantes*; and on the left those of *Complaisance*, *Petits soins* and *Assiduités*. Farther in the country are the cottages of *Legerté* and *Oubli*, with the *Lake Indifference*. By one route we are led to the district of *Desertion* and *Perfidie*, but by sailing down the stream we arrive at the towns *Tendre sur Estime*, *Tendre sur Inclination*, &c.

The action of this romance is placed in the early ages of Roman history, and the heroine is that Clelia who escaped from the power of Porsenna, by swimming across the Tiber. Aronce, the son of that monarch is the favoured lover of Clelia, and his rivals are a young Roman, called Horace, King Tarquin, and his son Sextus. A great part of the romance is occupied with an account of the expulsion of the royal house, and the siege of Rome undertaken by the exiled family and their allies. During the continuance of the siege, Clelia resided in a secure place in the vicinity of the town, along with other Roman ladies, whose society was greatly enlivened by the arrival of Anacreon, who was escorting two ladies on their way to consult the oracle of Praeneste: though upwards of sixty years of age, the Greek poet was still gay and



agreeable, and entertained the party as much by his *conversation* as his *Jolis vers*. The romance terminates with the conclusion of a separate peace between the Romans and Por-senna, and the union of Clelia with his son Aronce.

It is but a small part of the romance, however, which is occupied with what is meant as the principal subject ; the great proportion of these cumbrous volumes is filled with episodes, which are for the most part love-stories, tedious, uninteresting, and involved. It is well known, that in the characters introduced in these, Madame Scuderi has attempted to delineate many of her contemporaries. Accordingly, Brutus has been represented as a spark, and Lucretia as a coquette. One of the earliest episodes is that of Brutus and Lucretia, who carry on a sentimental intrigue, in the course of which Brutus addresses many love verses to his mistress, among which are the following :—

“ Quand verrai Je ce que J'adore  
Eclairer ces aimables lieux ;  
O doux momens—momens precieux,  
Ne reviendrez vous point encore—  
Helas ! de l' une a l' autre Aurore,  
A peine ai Je fermé les yeux,” &c.

But, if in this masquerade we cannot discover the age of Tarquin, we receive some knowledge concerning the manners and characters of that of Mad. Scuderi. In the fraternity of wise Syracusans she has painted the gentlemen of Port Royal, and particularly under the name of Timanto, has exhibited M. Arnauld d'Andilly, one of the chief ornaments of that learned society. Alcandre is Louis XIV., then only about eighteen years of age, of whom she has drawn a flattering portrait. Scaurus and Liriane, who come to consult the oracle of Praeneste, are intended for the celebrated Monsieur, and still more celebrated Madame Scarron. In Damo, the daughter of Pythagoras, who undertook the education of Brutus, she has painted Ninon L'Enclos, who instructed in gallantry the young noblemen who frequented her brilliant society. Finally, she has described herself in the portrait of Arricidie, who delighted more by the beauties of her mind than by the charms of her person. This incongruous plan of taking personages from ancient history, and

attributing to them manners and sentiments of modern refinement, especially with regard to the passion of love, is repeatedly censured and ridiculed by Boileau in his *Art Poétique* :—

Gardez donc de donner, ainsi que dans Clelie,  
L'air et l' esprit François a l'antique Italie ;  
Et sous des noms Romains faisant notre portrait,  
Peindre Caton galant et Brutus dameret.

The romance of

### ALMAHIDE,

also by Mad. Scuderi, is founded on the dissensions of the Zegris and Abencerrages, and opens with an account of a civil broil between these factions in the streets of Granada. The contest was beheld from the summit of a tower, by Roderic de Narva, a Spanish general, who had been taken prisoner by the Moors, and Fernand de Solis (a slave of Queen Almahide), who, at the request of the Christian chief, related to him the history of the court of Granada.

On the birth of Almahide, the reigning queen, an Arabian astrologer predicted that she would be happy and unfortunate, at once a maid and a married woman, the wife of a king and a slave, and a variety of similar conundrums. In order that she might avoid this inconsistent destiny, her father Morayzel sent her to Algiers, under care of the astrologer, who must have been the person of all others most interested in its fulfilment. After a number of adventures she was wrecked on the coast of Andalusia, and was received in the palace of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, where a reciprocal attachment arose between her and Ponce de Leon, son of that nobleman, and she soon after won the affections of the Marquis of Montemayor, heir of the Duke d'Infantada.

At length the parents of Almahide, learning that she was in the palace of Medina Sidonia, sent to reclaim her, and she was accordingly delivered up to them. Ponce de Leon followed her to Granada, in the garb of a slave : in that disguise he got himself sold to Morayzel, the father of Almahide, who presented him to that lady. A similar stratagem was adopted by her other Spanish lover, who allowed himself to be taken prisoner in a skirmish with



the Moors, commanded by Morayzel, who ordered him to be conducted to Granada, and presented likewise as an attendant to his daughter.

The dissensions which arose between the two lovers thus placed around the person of their mistress, are restrained by the prudence and temper of Almahide, but each watches in secret an opportunity of supplanting his rival.

Meanwhile Boaudilin, King of Granada, beheld his empire a prey to the factions of the Zegris and Abencerrages. As the monarch was of the former tribe, it was judged advisable, in order to heal the dissensions, that he should choose a queen from among the latter. Unfortunately he was so deeply enamoured of Miriam, a woman of low birth, whom it would have been unsuitable to have raised to the regal dignity, that he refused to offend her by espousing another. In these circumstances, Almahide was requested to impose on the public, by performing for a season the exterior offices of queen. She readily consented to execute a part in this plan; but she had scarcely entered on the public performance of royalty, when the king fell in love with her pseudo majesty, and unexpectedly proposed that she should not confine herself to the discharge of the ostensible duties of her situation. This important change in the original stipulation was resisted by Almahide, on the ground that her heart was already engaged to another, and the romance terminates with an account of some ineffectual stratagems, on the part of the king, to discover for whose sake Almahide rejected a more ample participation in the cares of royalty.

It will be perceived that the romance is left incomplete, and the part of which an abstract has been given, though published in eight volumes 8vo, can only be regarded as a sort of introductory chapter to the adventures that were intended to follow.

Mathilde d'Aguilar, the last romance of Mad. Scuderi, is also a Spanish story, and is partly founded on the contests between the Christians and Moors.

Of the analogies that subsist between all the departments of Belles Lettres, none are more close than those of romance and the drama. Accordingly, as the Italian tales sup-

plied the materials of our earliest tragedies and comedies, so the French heroic romances chiefly contributed to the formation of what may be considered as the second great school of the English drama, in which a stately ceremonial, and uniform grandeur of feeling and expression, were substituted for those grotesque characters and multifarious passions which had formerly held possession of the stage. From the French romances were derived the incidents that constitute the plots of those tragedies which appeared in the days of Charles II. and William, and to them may be attributed the prevalence of that false taste, that pomp and unnatural elevation, which characterise the dramatic productions of Dryden and Lee.

It appears very unaccountable that such romances as those of Calprenede and Scuderi, should in foreign countries have been the object of any species of literary imitation; but in their native soil the popularity of heroic romances, particularly those of Madame Scuderi, may, I think, be in some measure attributed to the number of living characters that were delineated. All were anxious to know what was said of their acquaintance, and to trace out a real or imaginary resemblance. The court ladies were delighted to behold flattering portraits of their beauty in Ibrahim or Clelia, and perhaps fondly hoped that their charms were consecrated to posterity. Hence the fame of the romance was transitory as the beauty, or, at least, as the existence, of the individuals whose persons or characters it portrayed. Mankind are little interested in the eyes or eye-brows of antiquated coquettes, and the works in which these were celebrated, soon appeared in that intrinsic dulness which had received animation from a temporary and adventitious interest. This charm being lost, nothing remained but a love so spiritualized, that it bore no resemblance to a real passion, and manners which referred to an ideal world of the creation of the author. The sentiments, too, of chivalry, which had revived under a more elegant and gallant form during the youth of Louis XIV. had worn out, and their decline was fatal to the works which they had called forth and fostered. The fair sex were now no longer the objects of deification, and those days had disappeared in which the



Duke of Rochefoucault could thus proclaim the influence of the charms of his mistress:—

Pour meriter son cœur pour plaire a ses beaux  
yeux,  
J' ai fait guerre a mon roi, Je l' aurois fait aux  
Dieux.

Besides, the size and prolixity of these compositions had a tendency to make them be neglected, when literary works began to abound of a shorter and more lively nature, and when the ladies had no longer leisure to devote the attention of a year and a half to the history of a fair Ethiopian.

In addition to all this, the heroic romance, when verging to its decline, was attacked by genius almost equal to that by which the tales of chivalry had formerly been laughed out of countenance. Moliere's *Precieuses Ridicules* appeared in 1659, when the heroic romance was too much in vogue to be easily brought into discredit; but the satire of Boileau, entitled *Les Heros de Roman, Dialogue*, though written about the same period, was not published till after the death of Madame Scuderi, in 1701, by which time the reputation of her romances was on the wane, and was probably still farther shaken by the ridicule of Boileau. That poet informs us, that in his youth, when these works were in fashion, he had perused them with much admiration, and regarded them as the masterpieces of the language. As his taste, however, improved, he became alive to their absurdities, and composed the dialogue above-mentioned, which he declares to be "Le

moins frivole ouvrage qui soit encore sorti de ma plume." In this work the scene is laid in the dominions of Pluto, who complains to Minos, that the shades which descend from earth no longer possess common sense, that they all talk *galanterie*, and upbraid Proserpine with having *l'air Bourgeois*. During this conversation, Rhadamanthus announces that all hell is in commotion; that he had met Prometheus at large, with his vulture on his hand, that Tantalus was intoxicated, and that Ixion had just ravished one of the furies. Cyrus, Alexander, and other heroes, are summoned from the Elysian fields to quell the insurrection. They appear accompanied by their mistresses, and the satire on the heroic romances is contained in the extravagance and affectation of their sentiments and language.<sup>1</sup>

It seems necessary to search farther into the reasons of the decay of heroic romance, of which the temporary favour may, to a modern reader, appear more unaccountable than the decline. Similar causes contributed to render pastoral romance unpopular; and, except in the works of Florian, there have been no recent imitations, of any note, of that species of composition. Spiritual fictions, of which the object was to inculcate a taste for the ascetic virtues, came to be regarded as despicable, in consequence of the increasing lights of reason. Political romances had never formed an extensive class of fiction, nor, in modern times, have there been many imitations of such works as the *Utopia* or *Argenis*.

## X CHAPTER XIII.

### French Novels—Fairy Tales—Voyages Imaginaires.

THE human mind seems to require some species of fiction for its amusement and relaxation, and we have seen in the above survey, that one species of fable has scarcely disappeared, when it has been succeeded by

another. The decline of tales of chivalry produced those various classes of romantic composition with which we have been recently engaged, and the concurrent causes which hastened their decay, were indirectly the

<sup>1</sup> The fiction of Boileau seems equally absurd as the works which he ridicules; but the classics were now coming into vogue, and a satire, composed af-

ter the manner of Lucian, was, of course, regarded as elegant and witty.



origin of those new sorts of fiction, which became prevalent in France towards the close of the 17th, and during the first half of the 18th century.

These, I think, may be reduced into *four* classes. 1. That which is founded on a basis of historical events, as the Exiles of the court of Augustus, and those numerous works concerning the intrigues of the French monarchs, from the first of the Merovingian race to the last of the Bourbons. 2. Novels, such as Marianne, Gil Blas, Heloise, &c., of which the incidents, whether serious or comical, are altogether imaginary. 3. A species of romance of a moral or satirical tendency, where foreigners are feigned to travel through the different states of Europe, and describe the manners of its inhabitants. This class comprehends such works as the Turkish Spy, and is partly fictitious and partly real. The journey and characters are the offspring of fancy, but a correct delineation of manners and customs is at least intended. 4. Fairy Tales, to which may be associated the French imitations of the Oriental Tales, and the *Voyages Imaginaires*.

1. The object of historical novels is to give to moral precept, the powerful stamp of experience and example. It was supposed that the adventures of well-known heroes, though in some measure fictitious or conjectural, would produce a more powerful impression than the story of an imaginary personage. In most compositions of this description, however, we are either tired with a minute detail of events already well known, or shocked by the manifest violation of historical truth.

The intrigues, both amorous and political, of the court of France, have given rise to the greatest number of the compositions of this description, which appeared during the period on which we are now entering. As far back as the year 1517, a sort of historical romance was formed on the subject of Clotaire and his four queens; but this style of writing does not appear to have been accommodated to the taste of the age, and a long period elapsed before it was imitated. About the middle of the subsequent century, M. de la Tour Hotman published the *Histoire Celtique*, in which, it is said, the principal actions of the French monarchs are shaded, but so faintly and am-

biguously, that those who are but moderately conversant in French history, cannot trace any correspondence in the incidents. At length, however, in 1695, appeared the *Intrigues Galantes de la cour de France*, written originally by M. Sauval, and afterwards improved and enlarged by Vanel, by whom it was published. This work contains a history of the amours of the French sovereigns, from the commencement of the monarchy to the reign of Lewis XIV. To a passion, which has, no doubt, especially in France, had considerable effect in state affairs, there is assigned throughout this work a paramount influence. It is represented as alone prompting the Merovingian family to unbounded atrocities, as the motive which stimulated Charles VII. to achieve the freedom of his country, and in future reigns as regulating the decisions of the cabinet, and distribution of the favours of the crown.

Besides this general history, the reign of almost every individual monarch has formed the subject of an amorous romance. We have *Anecdotes de la cour de France sous le regne de Childeric*, published in 1736, a work falsely attributed to Count Hamilton. The intrigues of the sanguinary and abandoned Fredegonde, the mistress of Chilperic, have formed the subject of many romances. Madame de Lussan wrote the *Anecdotes de la cour de Philippe Auguste*; *Memoires Secretes des Intrigues de la cour de Charles VII.*; *Anecdotes de la cour de François le Premier*, &c. The events of this prince's reign, so well calculated to make a figure in romance, have been the subject of other compositions of a similar description. Mad. Murat, author of the Fairy Tales, has written a novel entitled *La Comtesse de Chateaubriant*, who was the mistress of that monarch. *Les Amours de Grand Alcandre*, by the Princess of Conti, details the unremitting gallantries of Henry IV., and has obtained considerable celebrity in France, either from the intrinsic merit of the composition, the interesting character of the hero, or the rank of its author. The works which regard the amours of Lewis XIII., are, as might be expected, chiefly satirical. Those which relate to Lewis XIV. are covered with a thick veil of fiction, which was rendered prudent by the recent nature of



the intrigues, and the existence of the persons concerned, or, at least, of their immediate descendants.

Other writers of this period have resorted to more ancient times. *Les Femmes Galantes de l'Antiquité*, by M. Serviez, published in 1726, commences with the multifarious intrigues of the Pagan divinities. Whatever is marvellous in mythology has been retrenched, and its place filled up with amorous incident supplied from the fancy of the author. Io, Semele, &c., are the characters in the three first volumes; Sappho, and other females, who were content with mortal lovers, are exhibited in those that follow. As in the novels founded on French history, every incident in this work is attributed to love. Indeed, the author declares that it is his object to show, that the wonderful expeditions and incredible revolutions recorded in ancient history, had, in fact, no other spring than the resentment of a despised rival, or the dictates of an imperious mistress.

M. Serviez is also the author of *Les Impératrices Romaines*, in which he begins with the four wives of Julius Cæsar, and concludes with the nuptials of Constantine. Most of the anecdotes have some foundation in fact, but are amplified with circumstances feigned at the will of the author, who, if he wished to exhibit the enormities of vice in their greatest variety, and most unlimited extent, which may be presumed from his selection of such a subject, had little occasion to add the embellishments of fiction. This work was first published under the title of *Les Femmes des Douze Césars*, but being afterwards continued, it was printed in 1728, by the name which it now bears.

Of a similar description with this last mentioned work, is the *Exiles of the Court of Augustus*, by Madame Jardins, afterwards Madame Villedieu. In this romance, Ovid, of course, is a distinguished character. He is joined in his place of banishment by other illustrious Romans, who relate the history of their own misfortunes, and the incidents which had occurred in the capital during his exile.

All the works that have been mentioned are built on history, conjecture, and imagination. Most of them are full of gallantry, but

the authors pretend that the cause of morality is aided by the reflections which result. There is little display of sentiment or character. Truth and fiction are unpleasantly blended. Nor are the deviations from the former compensated by the embellishments of the latter, and the reader finds it difficult to pardon the alterations in history, as he is not presented in exchange with incidents of which the decoration palliates the want of reality.

2. Though the celebrated novel,

### LA PRINCESSE DE CLEVES,

be in some measure historical, and of consequence partakes, especially in its commencement, of the nature of that class of works with which we have last been engaged, it may justly be esteemed the earliest of those agreeable and purely fictitious productions, whose province it is to bring about natural events by natural means, and which preserve curiosity alive without the help of wonder—in which human life is exhibited in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world, and influenced only by passions which are actually to be found in our intercourse with mankind.

In this point of view, the *Princess of Cleves* forms, as it were, an æra in literature. The writers of the *Romans de longue Haleine*, and, indeed, most of the poetical love writers who were contemporary with them, seem rarely to have consulted, and consequently seldom affected, the heart. Their lovers appear more anxious to invent new conceits, than to gain their mistresses; and the mistresses, indeed, are such, that quibbles, fustian, or metaphysical jargon, was all they had a right to expect. Madame La Fayette,<sup>1</sup> the author of the *Princesse de Cleves*, at length brought the human passions into play. Her heroes and heroines, indeed, are still princes and princesses, and the catastrophe of the piece is perhaps too much in the manner of the old school, but she has produced a work at once dignified and tender, full of interesting portraits and of pleasing incidents.

The scene of events is laid at the court of Henry II. of France, and the time at which

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 30.



they are supposed to occur, is towards the conclusion of the reign of that monarch. The author begins with an account of the different personages of the court, and she delineates their characters, and unfolds their political views, with all the truth of history. Among those who appear in this romance, is Mary Stewart, the unfortunate queen of Scotland, and we are so accustomed to contemplate her in affliction and misery, that we feel a certain sympathy and satisfaction while viewing her in the gaiety and frivolity of youth.

Among the princes and lords at the court of Henry, the most distinguished for gallantry and personal attractions, was the Duke de Nemours. His reputation in these respects was indeed so high, that an ambassador, despatched by Henry to congratulate Queen Elizabeth on her accession to the throne, found her so full of his fame, that the duke is exhorted by Henry to try his fortune with that queen. He accordingly sends a confidant to examine if there were any grounds of hope, and meanwhile goes on a visit to the Duke of Savoy.

During his absence, a young beauty arrived at court, who surpassed all other beauties. She had been educated in a distant province by her mother, Madame de Chartres, a widow lady of the highest rank, of whom she was the only child, and had been inspired with the loftiest sentiments of purity, dignity, and decorum. On her arrival at court, her beauty, wealth, and rank, collect around her a crowd of the most distinguished aspirers. At length, by the advice of her mother, she fixes on the Prince of Cleves, a young man possessed of many excellent qualities, who, without knowing of her rank and riches, had become enamoured of her charms at an accidental meeting. This prince, in gaining the hand of the fair bride whom he passionately adored, was not completely happy. He knew that she felt no other sentiments towards him than those of the highest respect and esteem, and, as there was thus something more than possession, which he did not possess, he enjoyed the privileges of a husband without ceasing to be a lover.

Meanwhile the plan of the Duke of Nemours on the throne of England, seemed only to require his presence for its accomplishment ;

but, previous to his setting out for that kingdom, he returns to Paris to be present at the marriage of Claude of France. On his entrance into the ball-room, the king orders the Princess of Cleves and the duke, who then met for the first time, to unite in a dance, without any previous introduction or information.

The duke immediately becomes deeply enamoured of the princess, and gives up all thoughts of England, and his former mistresses. He conceals, however, his passion from his most intimate friends ; he avows it not even to the princess herself, but at the same time affords innumerable proofs of the greatness of his love and admiration ; without offending the most timid delicacy, he makes it evident that there never existed a passion more violent or more capable of making the greatest sacrifices. This is exhibited by details, which form one of the most interesting parts of the romance, and are such as perhaps only a female writer could delineate so well. The Princess of Cleves is involuntarily affected, and the death of her mother, which happened about this time, renders her more helpless. She finds, at length, that she can no longer flatter herself that the duke is an object of indifference to her, and that all she can now do is to avoid him as much as possible, and to live in a state of retirement from the world.

The Prince of Cleves was much at court, was anxious to have his wife there also, and extremely averse to her indulging a fondness for seclusion. But as she was every day exposed to see the Duke of Nemours at court, and even (as he was a friend of her husband) at her own house, she prevails on the prince to allow her to retire to the country. Accordingly she goes to Colomiers, a beautiful seat of the prince, at the distance of a day's journey from Paris. The Duke of Nemours heard that she was there, and as his sister, the Duchess of Mercoeur, lived in the neighbourhood, he resolves to pay a visit to his sister, accompanied by the Vidame de Chartres, who was his own most intimate friend, and a near relation of the Princess of Cleves.

One day, while hunting, the duke separates from his attendants, and wandering in the forest, arrives at a pavilion in the vicinity of Colomiers ; and having entered it, he sees,



while examining its beauties, the prince and princess of Cleves coming towards it. From a certain timidity and consciousness, the duke unwilling to be seen, retires to one of the chambers of the pavilion, while the prince and princess sit down in the portico without, and he is thus placed in a situation in which he could not avoid overhearing their conversation. The prince urges his wife to return to court; tells her that she is more melancholy than usual, and that some great change must have happened, or some important reasons exist, to induce her to shun the court. Urged at length in the strongest manner, and thinking that a direct acknowledgment would induce her husband to allow her to escape the perils which threatened her, she makes to him an avowal of her fears. She tells him that she wishes to avoid danger, in order that she might remain worthy of him. The prince is overwhelmed by this confession, for he had hitherto been chiefly consoled in thinking that if he was not passionately beloved, it was because her heart was unsusceptible of passion.—“ Et qui est il, madame, cet homme heureux qui vous donne cette crainte, depuis quand vous plaist il; qu’a t’il fait pour vous plaire; quel chemin a t’il trouvé pour aller a votre coeur? Je m’estois consolé en quelque sorte de ne l’avoir pas touché par la pensée qu’il estoit incapable de l’estre: cependant un autre fait ce que Je n’ay pû faire, J’ay tout ensemble la jalousie d’un mari et celle d’amant; mais il est impossible d’avoir celle d’un mari apres un procédé comme le votre—mais vous me rendez maheureux par la plus grande marque de fidelité que jamais une femme ait donnée à son mari.”

The prince, however, urges her in vain to reveal the object of her fears. “ Il me semble, repondit elle, que vous devez estre content de ma sincerité; ne m’en demandez pas davantage, et ne me donnez point lieu de me repentir de ce que Je viens de faire: contentez vous de l’assurance que Je vous donne encore, qu’aucune de mes actions n’a fait paroistre mes sentimens, et que l’on ne m’a jamais rien dit dont J’aye pû m’offencer.”

At length the princess is prevailed on to return to court, and her husband, who is still anxious to discover the object of her attachment and her dread, ascertains, by a strata-

gem, that it is the Duke de Nemours. A variety of details is then given, all of which admirably contribute to the development of the story, but which it is impossible to abridge. After the tragical death of Henry, of which, and its political effects, there is an excellent account, the Prince of Cleves and the Duke de Nemours proceed to the consecration of the young king at Rheims. Meanwhile the Princess of Cleves retires to her house at Colomiers. There she is visited by a lady, who, on her return, describes to the queen, in presence of the Prince of Cleves and Duke de Nemours, the solitary life led by the princess, and the delightful evenings which they had been accustomed to spend in a beautiful pavilion in the forest. The duke, recollecting the place, resolves to go thither, in the hopes of having an opportunity of speaking with the princess; and the prince, who, from some questions which the duke had put to the lady, anticipated his intentions, determines to watch his conduct.

On the following day the duke obtains leave of absence, on pretence of going to Paris, but departs for Colomiers; and the prince, who had suspicions of this design, sends after him a gentleman, on whom he could rely. This emissary follows the duke to the forest, enters it, and, though now night, sees M. Nemours make his way over some high palisades into the garden of flowers, where the pavilion stood.—“ Les palissades estoient fort hautes, et il y’en avoit encore derriere, pour empescher qu’on ne pust entrer; en sorte qu’il estoit assez difficile de se faire passage. Monsieur de Nemours en vingt à bout neantmoins: si-tost qu’il fut dans ce jardin, il n’eut pas de peine a demeler ou estoit Madame de Cleves; il vid beaucoup de lumieres dans le cabinet, toutes les fenestres en estoient ouvertes, et en se glissant le long des palissades, il s’en approcha avec un trouble et une emotion qu’il est aisé de se représenter. Il se rangea derriere une des fenestres, qui servoient de porte pour voir ce que faisoit Madame de Cleves. Il vid qu’elle estoit seule; mais il la vid d’une si admirable beauté, qu’à peine fut-il maistre du transport que luy donna cette veuë. Il faisoit chaud, et elle n’avoit rien sur sa tete et sur sa gorge, que ses cheveux confusement r’attachez.



Elle estoit sur un lit de repos avec une table devant elle, ou il y avoit plusieurs corbeilles pleines de rubans; elle en choisit quelquesuns, et Monsieur de Nemours remarqua que c'estoit des memes couleurs qu'il avoit portées au Tournoy. Il vid qu'elle en faisoit des noeuds a une canne des Indes fort extraordinaire, qu'il avoit donnée a sa soeur, a qui Madame de Cleves l'avoit prise, sans faire semblant de la reconnoistre pour avoir esté a Monsieur de Nemours. Après qu'elle eut achevé son ouvrage avec une grace et une douceur que répondoit sur son visage les sentimens qu'elle avoit dans le coeur, elle prit un flambeau et s'en alla proche d'une grande table, vis-a-vis du tableau du siege de Mets, où estoit le portrait de Monsieur de Nemours; elle s'assit, et se mit à regarder ce portrait avec une attention et une reverie, que la passion seule peut donner.

"On ne peut exprimer ce que sentit Monsieur de Nemours dans ce moment. Voir au milieu de la nuit, dans le plus beau lieu du monde, unde personne qu'il adoroit, la voir sans qu'elle sçeut qu'il la voyoit, et la voir tout occupée de choses qui avoient du raport a luy et a la passion qu'elle luy cachoit;—c'est ce qui n'a jamais esté goûté ny imaginé par nul autre amant."

While the duke advances to contemplate the princess more nearly, his scarf becomes entangled, and Madame de Cleves, turning at the noise that was occasioned, and half discovering the duke, immediately hastens to her female attendants, who were in an adjoining apartment. The duke hovers round the pavilion during the night, and returns in the morning to the village near the spot where the person employed to watch him was concealed. In the evening he again repairs to the pavilion, followed by the spy of the Prince of Cleves. It is now shut, however, and Madame de Cleves is not there. During the remainder of the night the duke again wanders disconsolate, and only leaves the forest at the approach of day.

He who had followed the Duke of Nemours returns to Rheims, and relates to his master the suspicious circumstances which had occurred. On hearing this intelligence, the Prince of Cleves is immediately seized with a fever. The princess hastens to him, and an

affecting conversation takes place. He informs her that her conduct has broken his heart, and though she, in some degree, succeeds in dispelling his suspicions, he soon after expires.

The grief of the princess is inexpressible. Meanwhile the Duke of Nemours in many ways testifies the most timid, and respectful, and violent love. An interview and admirable conversation take place, in which the princess, after confessing her attachment, persists in the resolution of remaining unmarried; in the first place, because she must always consider the duke as in some degree the destroyer of her husband; and, secondly, because his love was so essential to her happiness, that she feared lest by marriage she might put an end to it, and, finally, be tormented by his jealousy or coldness. She retires from court to her estates near the Pyrenees, where she falls into a long sickness. On her recovery she persists in the resolution of never again seeing the duke, or of hearing from him, and spends her time in exercises of devotion and charity.—

"Elle passoit une partie de l'année dans cette maison Religieuse, et l'autre chez elle; mais dans une retraite et dans des occupations plus saintes que celles des Convents les plus austeres, et sa vie, qui fut assez courte, laissa des exemples de vertu inimitables."

It will not, perhaps, be possible to find in any other production a more exact delineation of love than in the romance of which this is the outline. The circumstance of a married woman being the object of it, would render the work exceptionable, were not this, in some degree, necessary to the nature and plan of the composition, and in order to show the triumph of reason and virtue over passion. The purity of heart and dignified conduct of the Princess of Cleves are admirably delineated, and form a striking contrast to the gallantry and laxity in manners of those by whom she is surrounded. Had the author of this work lived at a different period, probably no exceptionable sentiment would have been admitted, but in the age of Lewis XIV., that monarch was considered as a model of perfection, and the faults and vices of his character were rendered fashionable. Some examples of this mode of thinking are exhibited in this work, and in particular a royal mistress seems to be regarded as a respectable and dignified cha-



racter. For instance the proud and virtuous Madame de Chartres speaks to her daughter in the following manner of the passion of Henry II. for the Duchess of Valentinois :— “ Il est vray que ce n’ est ni le merite, ni la fidelité, de Madame de Valentinois, qui a fait naitre la passion du Roy, ni qui l’ a conservée, et c’ est aussi en quoy il n’ est pas excusable ; car si cette femme avoit eü de a jeunesse et de la beauté jointe à sa naissance ; qu’ elle eust eu le merite de n’ avoir jamais rien aimé ; qu’ elle eust aimé le Roy avec une fidelité exacte ; qu’ elle l’ eust aimé par raport à sa seule personne, sans interest de grandeur, ni de fortune, et sans se servir de son pouvoir que pour des choses honnestes ou agreables au Roy meme ; il faut avoüer qu’ on auroit eü de la peine a s’ empescher de louer ce Prince du grand attachement qu’ il a pour elle.” Notwithstanding this laxity with regard to royal gallantry, and which must have had its effect in private life, there is in the whole composition, in the sentiments and language of this romance, a certain chivalrous grandeur, joined to a certain delicacy of feeling and sentiment, which is extremely interesting. The historical details are usually correct, and the episodes are introduced with great art, and never disturb the effect of the main story. In short, this admirable work has all the dignity of the old romance, without its prolixity or ridiculous inflation, and unites all the delicacy and minuteness of delineation of the modern novel to a certain feudal stateliness and majesty, such as, in a higher path of literature, appears in the works of Bossuet and Corneille.

Madame La Fayette is also author of *Zayde*, a novel of considerable beauty and interest, and of a description resembling the *Princess of Cleves*, though, unfortunately, partaking somewhat more of the old school of fiction in its incidents and characters.

Gonsalvo, a Spanish grandee, disgusted with the treatment he had received at the court of Leon, the ingratitude of his prince, the treachery of a friend, and the infidelity of a mistress, retires into the wilds of Catalonia. He is accidentally received in the house of Alphonso, a grandee of Navarre, who was in retirement, on account of the misery he had occasioned himself, and those he most tenderly loved, by

an extravagant and groundless jealousy. A community of wretchedness cements the friendship of Gonsalvo and Alphonso. They resolve to be unhappy together, and this residence gives the author an opportunity of contrasting the effects and force of the misery which results from the conduct of others, with that which is the consequence of our own.

One day, during his stay with Alphonso, Gonsalvo, while walking near the shore, perceives the wreck of a vessel, and at no great distance a woman lying insensible on the sand. She is conducted to the habitation of Alphonso, and soon after recovers. Between Gonsalvo and this lady, who proves to be Zayde, a Moorish princess, and the heroine of the romance, a mutual passion arises. Residing on a desert shore, and ignorant of each other’s language, their situation gives an opportunity for a singular painting of the emotions and intelligence of passion, which is infinitely more interesting than the subsequent adventures of the romance.

The story of *Zayde* is somewhat inferior to that of the *Princess of Cleves*, but these two works united may justly be regarded as forming a new æra in fiction, and as effecting the most fortunate revolution we have witnessed in the course of our survey. The novels of Madame La Fayette were, according to the expression of Voltaire, “ *Les premiers ou l’ on vit les moeurs des honnetes gens et des aventures naturelles decrites avec grace. Avant elle on ecrivoit d’ un style empoulé des choses peu vraisemblables.*” Accordingly, we shall find that henceforth the old romance was completely exploded. Writers of fictitious narratives were now precluded from the machinery of the chivalrous, and the expedients of the heroic romance. They could no longer employ giants or knights to carry a heroine away, or rescue her from captivity. They no longer attempted to please by unnatural or exaggerated representations, but emulated each other in the genuine exhibition of human character, and the manners of real life ; and the approximation of their works to this standard came now to be regarded as the criterion of their excellence.

Subsequent to this important revolution in taste, the most celebrated novels which ap-



peared in France are the *Vie de Marianne*, and *Paysan Parvenu* of Marivaux.<sup>1</sup> Of these the first has been deservedly the most popular. It is the display of the noble pride of virtue in misfortune, and the succour it at length receives from enlightened beneficence.

A coach, in which Marianne, the heroine of the work, was travelling, when only two or three years of age, with persons afterwards supposed to be her parents, was attacked by robbers, and all the passengers murdered, with the exception of this infant. The child is placed under charge of the curate of a neighbouring village, by whom she is brought up with much care and affection till her sixteenth year. At this period the curate's sister is called to Paris to attend a dying relative, and takes Marianne along with her, in order to place her in some creditable employment. During her stay in Paris, the curate's sister unfortunately falls sick, and dies after a short illness. By this time the curate had fallen into a state of imbecility, and his funds had been exhausted by the supplies necessary for his sister. It was, therefore, in vain for Marianne to think of returning to him, and she had no resource left but in the protection of a Religious, to whose care her friend had recommended her while on death-bed. The priest delivers her up to M. de Climal, in whose benevolence he placed implicit confidence, but who only extended his charity on such occasions for the most infamous purposes. Marianne is accordingly pensioned with Madame Dutour, a woman who kept a linen shop, and, during her residence there, the views of her hypocritical guardian are gradually developed. One day, while returning from mass, she accidentally sprains her foot, and being, in consequence, unable to proceed, she is conveyed to the house of M. Valville, who lived in the vicinity. Between this young gentleman and Marianne a mutual, and rather sudden, passion arises. M. de Climal, who was the uncle of Valville, accidentally comes into the apartment where his nephew was on his knees before Marianne. After her return to her former lodgings, Climal perceives the necessity of pressing his suit more earnestly, and Marianne, of course, rejects it with re-

doubled indignation. Valville, who had now discovered the place of her residence, enters one day while his uncle was on his knees before Marianne. After this, M. de Climal, despairing to gain the affections of Marianne, withdraws his support. The orphan now addresses herself to the Religious, who had originally recommended her to Climal; but, on visiting him, she finds that hypocrite along with the priest, endeavouring to persuade him that Marianne had ungratefully mistaken, and would probably misrepresent, his motives. Our heroine then applies to the prioress of a convent; and a beneficent lady, called Mad. Miran, being fortunately present when she unfolded her story, she is, in consequence, pensioned at the convent at this lady's charge. Soon after, Mad. Miran mentions to Marianne that she had recently experienced much distress on account of her son M. Valville having lately refused an advantageous marriage for the sake of a girl who had one day been carried into his house, in consequence of an accident she had suffered on the street. Marianne does not conceal from her benefactress that she is the person beloved by Valville, nor deny that a reciprocal attachment is felt by her, but she, at the same time, promises to use every effort to detach him from all thoughts of such an unequal alliance. The protestations, however, of Valville, that any other union would be the ruin of his happiness, induce his mother to agree to his nuptials with Marianne. It is therefore arranged, for the sake of public opinion, that the circumstances of her infancy should be concealed. These, however, being discovered by the unexpected entrance of Mad. Dutour, at the first introduction of Marianne to the relations of Valville, the marriage, in consequence, meets with much opposition from the family of her lover. All such obstacles are at length surmounted, and every thing seems tending to a happy conclusion; but severer trials were yet reserved for Marianne than any she had hitherto experienced. Valville suddenly becomes enamoured of another woman, and the novel terminates in the middle of the story, of a nun, who purposes to expatiate on her own misfortunes, in order, by the comparison, to console Marianne for the alienation of the affections of her lover.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 31.



This story is productive of many very interesting situations, but, at the same time, it is not free from improbabilities. It is never very well explained why Marianne did not return to the curate, and the only reason which suggests itself to the reader, is, that for the sake of adventure it is necessary she should remain at Paris. Though possible, it is not very likely, that Climal should have entered the house of Valville while on his knees before Marianne; that Valville, in turn, should have detected his uncle in the same critical situation; that Marianne should have visited the monk at the moment when Climal was persuading him of her misconceptions; that Mad. Dutour should have come to dispose of some goods in the first and momentary visit of ceremony which Marianne paid to the relatives of Valville; and that Valville and his mother should have entered the chamber of the minister, when, at the request of these relatives, he was employing his authority with Marianne to make her renounce all thoughts of an union with Valville. Yet it is on these strange contingencies that all the incidents of the novel hinge. It was, I think, indelicate in Madame Miran, and improbable, when the other parts of her character are considered, to force the heroine to harangue her son on the impropriety of his passion. The attempt to conceal the circumstances of her infancy was hopeless and degrading; nor were those measures resorted to which could have given any chance of imposing on the public. The silence of Mad. Dutour, by whose inadvertence the discovery is principally made, ought at all events to have been in the first place secured.

But the principal defect of the story is, that it has been left unfinished, so that the mind remains disappointed and unsatisfied. Yet had the conclusion been as far inferior to the last half of the novel as that portion is to the first, the indolence of Marivaux has detracted little from his own fame, or the amusement of posterity.

It is chiefly in what I have formerly styled the Ornaments of Romance that Marivaux excels. In portrait painting, indeed, he is unrivalled: he has drawn with inimitable art of distinction the natural goodness of Madame Miran, and the enlightened virtue

of her friend Madame Dorsin. The character of Marianne is a mixed one. Vanity seems her ruling passion, but it is of a species so natural and inoffensive that it only excites a smile, and never raises contempt nor disgust, nor a wish for her mortification. The author is never so happy as when he exposes the false pretences of assumed characters, the insolence of wealth, the arrogance of power or grandeur, the devices of mere formal or exterior religion, and the dissimulation of friends. He has also well represented the harshness of benefactors, their still more revolting compassion, and the thin veil of delicacy which they sometimes assume. But of all subjects, he has most happily depicted the stupid curiosity and offensive kindness of the vulgar. He had an opportunity for this species of delineation in the character of Madame Dutour, who pierces the hearts of those she means to console and treat with cordiality. "Est il vrai," says her shop girl to Marianne, "que vous n'avez ni pere ni mere, et que vous n'etes l'enfant a personne? Taisez vous, idiote, lui dit Mad. Dutour qui vit que J'etois fachée; qui est ce qui a jamais dit aux gens qu'ils sont des enfans trouvés? J'aimerois autant qu'on me dit que Je suis batarde." It is well known that Marivaux preferred his character of Climal to the Tartuffe of Moliere; but the delineations scarcely admit of comparison. The hypocrites in the novel and the comedy, as has been remarked in D'Alembert's *éloge* of Marivaux, are not of the same description. Climal is a courtly hypocrite, and accustomed to polished society: Tartuffe is a coarser and more vulgar character. The dying scene, in which Climal repents and makes atonement to Marianne, is accounted the finest part of the work: he, indeed, utters the true and touching language of contrition, but, it must be confessed, he has too great a command of words for a person expiring of apoplexy.

The sentiments and reflections in this novel are very numerous, and turn for the most part on the secret tricks of vanity, the deceptions of self-love in the most humiliating circumstances, and the sophisms of the passions. Marivaux untwists all the cords of the heart, but he is accused of dilating too much on a single thought, and of presenting it under every possible form. His delineations, too,



have more delicacy than strength. "Le sentiment," says D'Alembert, "y est plutot peint en miniature qu' il ne l' est a grands traits ;" and according to the expression of another philosopher, "il connoissoit tous les sentiers du coeur, mais il en ignoroit les grandes routes."

A chief defect of Marivaux lies in his style ; of this fault the English reader cannot be so sensible as his countrymen, but all French critics concur in reprobating the singularity and affectation of his idiom.

Marivaux' Paysan Parvenu resembles his Marianne (to which, however, it is wonderfully inferior) in many of its features. It would be difficult, however, to give any analysis of a work in which there are few incidents, and of which the chief merit consists in delineations of almost imperceptible shades of feeling and character.

The Abbé Prevot,<sup>1</sup> who holds the second rank among French novelists, is as much distinguished for imagination, as Marivaux for delicacy and knowledge of the heart. He was the first who carried the terrors of tragedy into romance ; and he has been termed the Crebillon of this species of composition, as he is chiefly anxious to appal the minds of his readers by the most terrifying and dismal representations. Thus, in his earliest production, the *Memoires d' un Homme de Qualité*, printed in 1729, the Marquis de \* \* \* \* having lost a beloved wife, retires to an insulated mansion in Italy, of which the walls and pavement are covered with black cloth, except where the garments of the deceased are suspended. A gold casket, containing her heart, is placed beside him. Here he remains by torch-light for many months, which he spends in gazing on the portrait of the departed object of his affections. From this habitation he launches at once into the gaieties of a Carthusian monastery, whence he is extracted by the Duc de \* \* \* \*, who persuades him to accompany his son in his travels through the courts of Europe. The story of *Manon Lescaut*, containing the adventures of a kept mistress and a swindler, the most singular and interesting of the novels of Prevot, has usually been appended to the *Memoirs of a*

*Man of Quality*, though it was written long after, and has also been published separately. It is the history of a young man possessed of many brilliant and some estimable qualities, but who, intoxicated by a fatal and almost irresistible attachment, is hurried into the violation of every rule of conduct, and finally prefers the life of a wretched wanderer, with the worthless object of his affections, to all the advantages presented by fortune and nature.

This young man, while at college, elopes with *Manon Lescaut*, the heroine of the novel, and from this disgraceful connexion he is never reclaimed. His mistress, unable to bear the ills of poverty, and seduced by an extravagant vanity, procures her own maintenance, and that of her lover, by the most disgraceful expedients. Yet while betraying, she preserves for him the most ardent affection. He, from corresponding motives of attachment, is induced to cheat at the gaming table, and to aid his mistress in extortion on her admirers ; thus presenting in every situation the contrast of unworthy conduct and exalted sentiment. The author palliates the actions of his hero by painting in the warmest colours the matchless beauty and graces, and delightful gaiety, of *Manon* ; and, by means of the same attributes, throws around her an enchantment, which never utterly forsakes her in the deepest abyss of vice and misery. An ill-concerted fraud at length gives the friends of her infatuated lover an opportunity of separating him from his mistress. She is sent along with other convicts to New Orleans, but her adorer resolves to accompany her across the Atlantic. In the new world she becomes as admirable for the constancy as she had formerly been for the warmth of her attachment, and the errors of an ardent imagination are represented as extinguished by the virtues of an affectionate heart. She rejects an advantageous alliance, and the companion of her exile having incurred the displeasure of the governor, she follows him to the wilds of America, where she expires, exhausted by grief and fatigue. Her lover returns to France.

It has been objected to the moral tendency of this work, that, spite of her errors and failings, the character of *Manon* is too captivating ; but, in fact, in the early part of her

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 32.



career, she possesses a prodigious selfishness, and a selfishness of all others the most disgusting—the desire of luxury and pleasure, a rage for frequenting the theatre and opera; and it is for the gratification of such passions as these that she betrays and sacrifices her lover. It is only in the wilds of the western world that the aim of the author is developed, which seems to be to show that there is no mind which a strong attachment may not elevate above itself, and render capable of every virtue. The defects of the novel are no doubt numerous, in point of morals, probability, and good taste, yet some portion of admiration must ever attend the matchless beauty of Manon, and some share of interest follow the exalted passion and self-devotedness of her lover.

A chief defect of the novels of Prevot consists in a perplexed arrangement of the incidents: he has an appearance of advancing at hazard, without having fixed whither he is tending; he heaps one event on another, and frequently loses sight of his most interesting characters. These faults are less apparent in *Manon L'Escaut* than most of his other works, but are very remarkable in his *Dean of Coleraine* (*Doyen de Killerin*) and the *Life of Cleveland*. The former is modestly announced by the author as "*Histoire ornée de tout ce qui peut rendre une lecture utile et agreable.*" It comprehends the story of a catholic family of Ireland, consisting of three brothers and a sister, who pass over to France after the Revolution, in order to push their fortunes in that country. The dean, who is the eldest, though against this experiment, agrees to accompany his relatives, that they may receive the benefit of his wisdom and counsel, which he, on all occasions, most liberally imparts to them. Accordingly, the novel consists of the numerous adventures, embarrassments, and afflictions which this family encounters in a foreign land, and which chiefly originate in the singular beauty of the sister, the ambition of the second, and the weakness of the youngest brother. The dean, who is a Christian of the most rigorous virtue, is entirely occupied with the present and future welfare of his family. His admonitions, however, are so frequent and tedious, that, as the Abbé Desfontaines has remarked, he is as in-

sufferable to the reader as to his brothers and sister.

Cleveland comprehends the romantic adventures of a natural son of Oliver Cromwell. In his youth he is brought up in solitude by his mother, and is neglected, or rather persecuted, by his father, for whom he early conceives an insurmountable aversion. At length he escapes into France, and his diffidence at his entrance into life, and the rise and progress of his first passion, are happily painted. He follows the object of his affections to the wilds of America, whither she had accompanied her father. There he is united to his mistress, and becomes the chief and benefactor of a tribe of savages, a novel situation, in which he has an opportunity of unfolding all the energies of his mind. An ill-founded jealousy, however, on the part of his wife, over which she brooded in silence for a long course of years, at length leads to new adventures, and to dreadful catastrophes. One of the most curious and interesting parts of the novel, is the episode concerning an almost inaccessible island in the neighbourhood of St Helena, in which there was established a sort of Utopian colony, consisting of protestant refugees from Rochelle, who, harassed by a dreadful siege, and panting for a secure asylum, carefully concealed themselves in this retreat from the rest of the world. This colony is visited by another natural son of Oliver Cromwell, who accidentally meets his brother Cleveland at sea, and relates to him what he had witnessed. On the whole, the adventures in this work are wild and incredible, but the characters are marked, impassioned, and singular.

The novels of Madame Riccoboni, which were chiefly written about the middle of the 18th century, are distinguished by their delicacy and spirit. Of these compositions the style is clear and beautiful, and the reflections, though not so deep-sought as those of Marivaux, are remarkable for their novelty and justness, and the felicity with which they are expressed. Indeed, at every page we meet with happy phrases and sentiments, which we wish to retain and remember. The story of Miss Jenny Salisbury is, I think, the most interesting and pathetic of her productions. It is the exhibition of female virtue



in circumstances of the deepest danger and poverty, which seems to be a favourite subject with the French novelists.

Le Marquis de Cressy contains the picture of a man of rank and talents, but of unbounded ambition and worthless heart. He sacrifices the woman whom he loved, and by whom he was in turn adored, for the sake of a more advantageous alliance. She whom he chose as his wife is at last more unhappy than the mistress he had forsaken, and is driven, by the indifference and infidelity of her husband, to seek a voluntary oblivion of her misfortunes. The marquis was not so hardened as not to be rendered wretched by the misery he had dealt around him. "Il fut grand—il fut distingué—il obtint tous les titres, tous les honneurs qu'il avoit désiré : il fut riche—il fut élevé, mais il ne fut point heureux."

In the Letters of Lady Catesby, are exhibited the mental struggles of a woman who had been forsaken by a man she adored, but who now sought pardon and reconciliation. Her lover had been solemnly engaged to her in marriage, but, from a scruple of conscience, had chosen another woman. His wife being now dead, he had come to London, and anew solicited the hand of Lady Catesby. She, to avoid his importunities, retired to the country, and in her first letters to her friend, which form by much the best part of the work, she delineates with admirable spirit the characters of the individuals she met at the castles and manor-houses she visited. The novel, or rather story, of Ernestine, also possesses exquisite grace and beauty. The other compositions of Mad. Riccoboni, Christine de Suabe, Histoire d'Aloise de Livarot, &c., are, I think, considerably inferior to the productions that have been mentioned.

Rousseau's *Héloïse* is generally regarded as the most eloquent and pathetic of French novels ; but it seems more deserving of admiration for the passion and feeling displayed in particular passages, than for the excellence of the fable. Events of the highest interest, which occur at the commencement of the work, serve to throw languor over the succeeding pages. The principal actions of the chief characters, on which the romance is founded, are altogether improbable, and not

only inconsistent with the sentiments and passions elsewhere ascribed to these individuals, but repugnant to the ordinary feelings of human nature. Of this description are the marriage of Julia with Volmar, while she was yet enamoured of Saint-Preux—the residence of Saint-Preux with the mistress he adored, and the man she had espoused, and the confidence reposed in him by Volmar, while aware of the attachment that had subsisted between him and Julia. The author having placed his characters in this situation, extricates himself from all difficulties by the death of the heroine, who, according to the expression of a French writer, "Meurt uniquement pour tirer M. Rousseau d'embarras."

The pathos and eloquence of Rousseau, the delicacy of Mad. Riccoboni, the gloomy, but forcible paintings of Prevot, and the knowledge of human nature displayed in the works of Marivaux, have raised the French to the highest reputation for the composition of novels of the serious class. In many of these, however, though admirable in point of talent, there is too often a contest of duties, in which those are adhered to which should be subordinate, and those abandoned which ought to be paramount to all others. Thus, they sometimes entice us to find, in the subtilty of feeling, a pardon for our neglect of the more homely and downright duties, and lead us to nourish the blossoms of virtue more than the root or branches.

It was naturally to be expected, that while the more serious class of fictitious compositions was thus successfully cultivated, the more gay and lively productions of a similar description should not have been neglected. *La Gaïeté Française* had become proverbial among all the nations of Europe, and, as the fictions of a people are invariably expressive in some degree of its character, corresponding compositions naturally arose. Of these, the most distinguished are the works of Le Sage, whose *Gil Blas* is too well known to require here any detail of those incidents, in which all conditions of life are represented with such fidelity and animation. The originality, however, of this entertaining novel has been much questioned, in consequence of its resemblance to the Spanish romance *Marcos de Obregon*, of which an account has already been given



(see p. 316, &c.). Many of the stories in *Gil Blas* are also derived from the plots of Spanish comedies; but they have in turn suggested the scenes of many of our English dramas: Cibber's comedy *She Would and She Would Not*, is taken from the story of *Aurora*, and Thomson's *Tancred and Sigismunda* is from the *Mariage de Vengeance*.

The leading idea of the *Diabole Boiteux* is also borrowed from the Spanish, as the author indeed has acknowledged in his dedication. Part of the fiction, however, appears to have been originally drawn from the cabalistic work, entitled *Vinculum Spirituum*. The Asiatics believed that, by abstinence and particular prayers, evil spirits could be reduced to obedience and confined in phials. Accordingly, in the *Vinculum Spirituum*, which was derived from the east, it is said that Solomon discovered, by means of a certain learned book, the valuable secret of inclosing in a bottle of black glass, three millions of infernal spirits, with seventy-two of their kings, of whom Bebeth was the chief, Beliar the second, and *Asmodeus* the third. Solomon afterwards cast this bottle into a great well near Babylon. Fortunately for the contents, the Babylonians, hoping to find a treasure in this well, descended into it, and broke the bottle, on which the emancipated demons returned to their ordinary element. The notion of the confinement of *Asmodeus* in the glass bottle, has been adopted in the Spanish work, entitled *El Diabole Cojuelo*, written by Luis Velez de Guevara, and first printed in 1641. In that production, the student Don Cleofas having accidentally entered the abode of an astrologer, delivers from a glass bottle, in which he had been confined by the conjurer, the devil, called the *Diabole Cojuelo*, who is a spirit nearly of the same description as the *Asmodée* of Le Sage, and who, in return for the service he had received from the scholar, exhibits to him the interior of the houses of Madrid. Many of Le Sage's portraits are also copied from the work of Guevara; as, for instance, that of Donna Fabula and her husband Don Torribio—of the alchemist employed in search of the philosopher's stone, and the hypocrite preparing to attend an assemblage of sorcerers, which was to be held between St Sebastian and Fontarabia.

As in Le Sage, the *Diabole Cojuelo* unroofs one of the mad-houses (*casa de los locos*); but towards the conclusion of the work, he carries D. Cleofas beyond Madrid—he shows him the academies and convents in the vicinity, and transports him through the air to the provincial towns of Spain and the country seats of its grandees. Some of the situations in the *Diabole Boiteux* have also been borrowed from the *Dia y noche de Madrid*, by F. Santos. The story of Count Belflor has, in turn, evidently suggested the plot of Beaumarchais' drama, entitled *Eugenio*.

The Bachelor of Salamanca, also written by Le Sage, possesses much of the same style of humour which characterizes *Gil Blas* and the *Diabole Boiteux*, though it is greatly inferior to either of these compositions. In this work, Don Cherubim, the Bachelor of Salamanca, is placed in all different situations of life—a plan which gives scope to the author for satire, as various as the classes of men with whom his hero at different times associates. The first part, in which he appears as a tutor, is by much the most novel and entertaining. Le Sage has there admirably painted the capricious and headstrong humours of children—the absurd indulgence of parents—the hardships, slavery, and indelicacy of treatment, so often experienced by a class of men to whom the obligations due have been in all countries too slightly appreciated.—“*Si enim genitoribus corporum nostrorum omnia, quid non ingeniorum parentibus ac formatoribus debeamus? Quanto enim melius de nobis meriti sunt, qui animum nostrum excoluere, quam qui corpus.*”—(*Petrarc. lit.*)

Le Sage is also the reputed author of *Estevanillo Gonzales ou le Garçon de Bonne humeur*. The plan of this romance, and some of the incidents (although fewer than might be supposed from the correspondence of the titles), have been suggested by the Spanish work, *Vida y hechos de Estevanillo Gonzalez hombre de buen humor compuesto por el mesmo*, which was first printed at Brussels in 1640.

During the minority of Lewis XV., and the regency of that Duke of Orleans who published the splendid edition of the Pastoral of Longus, the court of France assumed an appearance of gay and open profligacy, resembling that which half a century before



had prevailed in England, in the days of Charles, and forming a striking contrast to the austere and sombre manners which characterized the latter years of the reign of Lewis XIV. About that period, when libertinism had become fashionable from the sanction of the highest names in the state, Crébillon, the son of the celebrated tragic poet of that name, became the founder of a new species of comic novel. His works enjoyed at one time a high but not a long-continued, nor deserved reputation. They chiefly owed their popularity to satire and personal allusions, and the elegant garb in which pictures of debauchery were attired. A great part of his *Ecumoir*, or *Tanzai et Neadarna*, feigned to be translated from the Japanese language, was written to ridicule the disturbances occasioned by the disputes of the Jansenists and Molinists, and it also contains the allegorical history of the Bull *Unigenitus*, the subject of so much discussion and controversy during the regency of the Duke of Orleans. In its more obvious meaning, it is the story of an eastern prince and princess, to whose mutual love and happiness continual obstacles are presented by the malevolence of fairies. The romance is occupied with the means by which these impediments are attempted to be removed, and of which the chief is the implement that gives title to the romance. In the episode of a mole, who had once been a fairy called Moustache, and who relates her own story, the author has ridiculed the affected style and endless reflections of Marivaux.

In the *Sopha*, a spirit is confined by Brama to that article of furniture, which gives name to the work. He is allowed to change the *Sopha* of residence, but is doomed to remain in a habitation of this nature, till emancipated by a rare concurrence.

Ah *Quel Conte!* is the story of an eastern monarch, who was beloved by a fairy, the protectress of his dominions. In revenge for the neglect with which he treated her, she inspired him with a passion for a goose, whom he had met at a brilliant ball, attended by all the birds, of which there is a long description, and which, I suppose, is the origin of such productions as the *Elephant's Ball*, the *Peacock at Home*, &c. Most of the birds prove to have been princes, princesses, or fairies,

and the greater part of the romance is occupied with the adventures which led to their metamorphosis, in which there is no doubt a concealed meaning and satire, but which, to most readers of this country, must appear a mass of unintelligible extravagance.

In *Les Egarements du Cœur et de l'Esprit*, the adventures of more than one individual of rank at the French court of that day are said to be depicted. This work comprehends the detail of a young man's first entrance into life, his inexperience and seduction, and the consequent remorse which holds out the prospect of his return to the paths of virtue. The plan of the author has been confined to the effects of love, or something resembling it, and the influence of the other passions has not been displayed.

Crébillon was imitated by M. Bastide, afterwards the conductor of the *Bibliothèque des Romans*; and also by Dorat, in his *Malheurs d'Inconstance* and in *Les Sacrifices de l'Amour*. The style of composition, however, introduced by Crébillon, was only popular for a moment, and fell into disrepute, when the manners of the French court became, if not more pure, at least less openly licentious.

An author who had already exhausted all the sources of tragic pathos and sympathy, also opened all the floods of satire and ridicule on the superstitions and despotism of his country. In most of the romances of Voltaire, there is a philosophical or moral object in view; but whether from this being the intention of the author, or from the reader being carried away by the poignant charms of his pleasantry and style, the full scope of the incidents is seldom perceived till the conclusion. The most frequent aim of this writer is to place in opposition what ought to be, and what is; to contrast pedantry with ignorance—the power of the great with their unworthiness—the austerity of religious dogmas with the corruptness of those who inculcate them. *Memnon* is intended to show, that it is folly to aspire to the height of wisdom, and *Zadig*, that the events of life are placed beyond our control. *L'Homme au quarante ecus* was meant to ridicule the system of the economists, and *Bacbouc* to correct the disposition of the French nation, to behold every thing in a ridiculous point of view, of which among all



his countrymen Voltaire was himself the most guilty. But, though the object of this celebrated author, and the charms by which his incidents are adorned, be peculiar to himself, there is seldom much novelty in the incidents themselves. In *Micromegas* he has imitated an idea of *Gulliver's Travels*; in the *Ingenu*, the principal situation is derived from the *Baronne de Luz*, a romance by M. Duclos. The origin of almost every chapter in *Zadig* may be easily traced; thus the story of *Le Nez* has been suggested by the *Matron of Ephesus*: In *Ariosto* may be found *Les Combats*, or the story of the man in green armour, and in one of the *Contes Devots*, that of the hermit and angel introduced towards the conclusion; the pursuit of the bitch and horse is from the search of the *Cynogefore*, in the *Soirées Bretonnes* of Gueulette, who had it from an Italian work, *Peregrinaggio de Tre Figliuole del Re de Serendippo*. The tale, however, had been originally told in an Arabic work of the 13th century, entitled *Nighiaristan*, which was written to show the acuteness of the Arabian nation. In the *Nighiaristan*, three brothers, of the family of Adnan, set out on their travels. They are met by a camel-driver, who asks if they had seen a camel he had lost. One brother says that the animal was blind of an eye; the second that he wanted a tooth; the last that he was lame, and was loaded with oil on one side, and honey on the other. Being thus suspected of having stolen the camel, the brothers are sent to prison, and afterwards explain to the judge by what observations they had discovered all these circumstances. Another of Voltaire's novels, *La Princesse de Babylon*, has been suggested by a French tale, entitled *Le Parisien et la Princesse de Babylone*, inserted in *La Nouvelle Fabrique des excellens Traits de Verités* par Philippe Alcripe. The name here assumed is fictitious, but the author is known to have been a monk of the abbey of Mortemer, who lived about the middle of the 16th century. In his tale *Le Parisien*, &c., the beautiful princess of Babylon has a disgusting and unwelcome suitor in the person of the *Sophi of Persia*. The son of a French jeweller hearing of her beauty, sends her an amatory epistle, by means of a swallow, and receives a favourable answer by a similar conveyance; and this bird, which

corresponds to Voltaire's phoenix, becomes the friend and confidant of the lovers. Afterwards the Parisian repairs to Babylon, and the princess, by feigning sickness, effects an elopement.

In *Candide*, the most celebrated of Voltaire's romances, the incidents seem to possess more novelty. The object of that work, as every one knows, is to ridicule the notion that all things in this world are for the best, by a representation of the calamities of life artfully aggravated. It seems doubtful, however, how far the system of optimism, if rightly understood, is deserving of ridicule. That war, and vice, and disease, are productive of extensive and complicated misery among mankind, cannot indeed be denied, but another arrangement, it must be presumed, was impracticable; and he who doubts that the present system is the most suitable that can possibly be dispensed, seems also to doubt whether the Author of Nature be infinitely good.

3. The next class of fictions, according to the arrangement adopted, comprehends those works of local satire in which remarks on the history, manners, and customs of a nation, are presented through the supposed medium of a foreigner, whose views are unbiassed by the ideas and associations to which the mind of a native is habituated.

Of this species of composition, the object is to show that our manners and arts are not so near perfection as self-love and habit lead us to imagine; and its form was adopted, that opinions, religious and political, might be broached with more freedom, by being attributed to outlandish characters, for whose sentiments the author could not be held responsible.

The *Turkish Spy* (*L'Esploratore Turco*) seems to have been the prototype of this species of composition. According to some authors, it was written by an Italian, named John Paul Marana, who, being involved in political difficulties in his own country, went to reside at Paris, and there wrote the *Turkish Spy*. It first appeared, it has been said (*Mélanges de Vigneul Marville*) in the Italian language, and came out in separate volumes, towards the close of the 17th century. I certainly never saw the work in that language,



and its Italian original is somewhat questionable. We are told, indeed, in Nichols' Literary Anecdotes, that Dr Manley was the original author, and that Dr Midgeley, who pretended to have translated it from the Italian, having found it among his papers, appropriated the composition to his own use.

Mahmut, the Turkish Spy, is feigned to have been employed by the Porte to observe the conduct of the Christian courts, and is supposed to have resided at Paris from 1637 to 1682. During this period he corresponds with the divan, and also with his own friends and confidants at Constantinople. The work comprehends an infinite variety of subjects, but the information communicated is chiefly historical; the author principally discourses on the affairs of France, but the internal politics of Spain, and England, and the Italian states, are also discussed. In some letters he gives an account of battles, sieges, and other events of a campaign; descants on the conduct and valour of great captains, and on the fortune of war; in others he treats of court intrigues, and the subtleties of statesmen. When he addresses his friends and confidants, he amuses them with relations that are comical, affecting, or strange, the new discoveries in art and science, and those antiquarian researches, which, according to his expression, are calculated to draw the veil from the infancy of time, and uncover the cradle of the world. On religious topics he discourses with much freedom, and also on what he hears concerning the affairs of his own country,—the discontent and rebellion of the beys and bassas, the war with the Persians, and the amours of the seraglio.

The style of this miscellaneous composition is grave, sustained, and solemn, and pomp of expression is preserved, even in the gay and humorous passages. It has been objected to the author, that he treats of all things, but of nothing profoundly. A deep research, however, does not appear to have been his intention, nor is it very consistent with the plan of such a book as the Turkish Spy.

The work attributed to Marana was succeeded by the Persian Letters of Montesquieu, which is the most popular production of the class with which we are now engaged. Of his celebrated composition, the chief aim is

to give ingenious pictures of the misdemeanours of mankind, and to attract the public attention to some important moral and political topics. The principal part of the work consists of the letters of two Persians, with whom, as the author feigns, he had become acquainted at Paris, and had received from them copies of their correspondence. Usbek, one of these foreigners, had fled from the envy and calumny of his countrymen, and, attended only by his friend Rica, had come to the west of Europe, allured by the pursuit of science. The style of the letters of these individuals, which are addressed to their eastern friends, is widely different. Those of Usbek, even when he writes concerning his seraglio, are philosophical and grave, those of Rica are more light and entertaining. In the correspondence of both, European customs and opinions are contrasted with those of Asia, and the vices and follies of the western world are attacked in an oriental tone and manner. There are also a good many speculations on political economy, especially on the subject of population. In the letters of Usbek to his wives and dependants, there is painted a degree of jealousy of the former, and contempt of the latter, even when in his best humour, which I rather suppose must be strained and exaggerated. "Comment" (says he in a letter to one of his favourite women), "comment vous etes vous oublié jusqu' a ne pas sentir, qu'il ne vous est pas permis de recevoir dans votre chambre un Eunuque Blanc, tandis que vous en avez de Noirs destinés a vous servir:" he elsewhere expresses the utmost rage against his wives, because they complain, "que la presence continuelle d'un Eunuque Noir les ennuye;" he is thrown into despair by the following pieces of intelligence, communicated by his grand eunuch, "Zelis allant il y a quelques jours a la Mosque, laissa tomber son voile et parut presque a visage decouvert, devant tout le peuple.—J'ai trouve Zachi couchée avec *une* de ses esclaves, chose si defendue par les loix du Serrail." In writing to his eunuchs, he habitually addresses them, "Rebut indigne de la nature humaine;" and he reminds them, "Vous n'etes dans le monde que pour vivre sous mes loix, ou pour mourir des que Je l'ordonne—que ne respirez qu' autant que mon bonheur, mon amour, ma



jalousie meme ont besoin de votre bassesse : et enfin que ne pourrez avoir d'autre partage que la soumission, d'autre ame que mes volontés, d'autre esperance que ma felicité." This Persian, however, is as extravagant in his commendations as his abuse. Thus, in a letter addressed to Mollak, the keeper of the three tombs, he asks him, forgetting, I suppose, that he was the keeper of these tombs, "Pourquoi vis tu dans les tombeaux, Divin Mollak ?—tu es bien plus fait pour le sejour des etoiles : tu te caches sans doute de peur d'obscurcir le Soleil : tu n'as point de tâches comme cet Astre, mais comme lui tu te couvres de Nuages."

In the Jewish Spy, by D'Argens, which followed the Persian letters, there is much sarcasm and invective ; the author thinks strongly, but his style is ungraceful.

The Peruvian Letters, by Madame Graffigny, are somewhat different from the works of this class which I have hitherto mentioned. There is a private and domestic story, interwoven with reflections on manners, and, according to some critics, these letters should be accounted the earliest epistolary novel of France.

Zilia, a Peruvian virgin, when about to be espoused by the Inca, is carried off by the Spaniards. The vessel in which she was conveyed from America is captured on its passage by a French ship. From Paris she corresponds with her Peruvian lover, and expresses the effect that our most common arts and discoveries would have on one, who had not been accustomed to them from infancy. The commander of the French vessel had conceived for his captive the most violent, but most generous attachment ; he does every thing in his power to facilitate for her an interview with the Inca, who, it was understood, had lately arrived in Spain. But the Peruvian monarch had already formed other ties ; his religion and his heart were changed. He comes to Paris, but it seems to be only for the purpose of forsaking his mistress in form. Though abandoned to her fate, and disappointed in her dearest expectations, Zilia, pleading the sanctity of the engagements she had come under, from which the infidelity of the Inca could not absolve her, refuses to transfer to her European lover the hand that had been pledged to the Peruvian prince.

The Chinese Spy was written about the middle of the 18th century. It contains the letters of three Mandarins, who were commissioned by their emperor to examine into the state of the religious opinions, policy, and manners of the Europeans. The first of their number remains at Paris, or London, but one of the subordinate mandarins is despatched to Spain, and the other to the Italian states, whence they correspond with the principal emissary. In his despatches to China, the chief Mandarin enters at considerable length into the politics of France and England, and gives some account of the grand epochs of European history from the downfall of the Roman empire. The Italian traveller has merely exhibited a sketch of his journey, but has happily enough described the characteristic features of the petty states he visited ; the eagerness of gain at Genoa ; the splendid but empty pomp of Milan ; the mystery and intrigues of Venice, and the desolation of Ferrara ; with regard to the court of Turin, he humorously proposes to purchase it as an ornament for the cabinet of the Chinese emperor. There is a good deal of liveliness and *naiveté* in some of the remarks, and the mode in which things are viewed by these Mandarins : "Une chose surtout nous surprit etrangement ; c'etoit de voir marcher de jeunes femmes decouvertes dans les Rues, sans qu'aucun homme les violat." And again, "Les Negocians d'Europe acquierent de grands biens, avec beaucoup d'aisance—voici comme ils amassent des tre-sors. On attire chez soi autant de richesses que l'on peut. Quand on en a fait une bonne provision, l'on ferme sa porte et l'on garde ce qu'on a : Cela s'appelle ici, faire Banque-route."

Those works that have been just mentioned, gave rise to the more modern productions, L'Espion Anglois, L'Espion Americain en Europe, and in this country to Goldsmith's Citizen of the World.

In most of these compositions, particularly in the Chinese Spy and Persian Letters, every thing is seen with a disapproving and satirical eye. This, however, may in some degree be considered as characteristic, since all men are in general disposed to prefer the customs and manners in which they have been educated ; and accordingly every variation in the



manners of another country, from those which existed in their own, is apt to strike them as a defect, more especially if the latter have been endeared to them by absence. On the whole, the idea of this species of writing must be considered as happy, since, besides furnishing an opportunity for *naïve* remark, and affording greater liberty of examining without offence, or even of contradicting generally received opinions, it presents in a new light objects formerly familiar. Hence we feel a species of pleasure similar to that which is derived from pointing out a well-known striking scene to a stranger, enjoying his surprise, and even in some degree sympathetically partaking of his wonder.

4. The fourth class of French fictions of the 18th century, recalls us from those works in which the real events of human life are represented, to incidents more stupendous, and enchantments more wonderful, even than those portrayed in the brightest ages of chivalry.

Men of circumscribed conceptions believe in corporeal and limited deities, in preference to one spiritual and omnipotent. They naturally attribute every thing to direct agency—evil to malevolent, and good to beneficent, powers. But, even when an infant people has believed in one supreme God, they have deemed all nature full of other invisible beings:—

— Passim genios sparsere latentes,  
Qui regerent, motumque darent, vitamque foverent,  
Arboribus Dryadas, fluviorum Naiadas undis,  
Tum Satyros sylvis, et turpia numina Faunos.

These nymphs and dryads of classical antiquity owed their existence to the same principles of belief which afterwards peopled the elements with fairies, and adventures have been related concerning them which have a considerable analogy to that class of stories on which we are now entering. A scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius relates, that one called Rhoecus, observing a beautiful oak ready to fall, ordered it to be supported. The nymph of the tree, whose existence depended on its preservation, unexpectedly appeared to him, and bade him demand from her whatever he pleased in return. This dryad being handsome, Rhoecus asked to be entertained as her lover, which she readily promised to her pre-

server, and soon after sent a bee to summon him; but the young man being engaged at the time, and provoked at its unintelligible buzz, drove the insect from him. The nymph, offended at this uncivil treatment of her ambassador, deprived Rhoecus of his sight. The ancients, too, had goddesses, who, like fairies, presided over infants at birth; and, like fairies, the female deities of mythology avenged themselves on those who treated them with disrespect, when they appeared in a degraded condition. Latona changed the rustics of Lycia into frogs, because they drove her from a fountain at which she attempted to slake her thirst, when flying from the rage of Juno; and Ceres metamorphosed into a newt a saucy boy who mocked her, for the greed with which she supped some barley broth, when she came weary and in disguise to a cottage. On the other hand, we are told by Palaephatus, that Venus having appeared in shape of a deformed old woman to a poor ferryman, who was himself in the decrepitude of age, and being ferried over by him without reward, she converted him for this service into the beautiful youth so much beloved by Sappho.

Fairies of modern times are of different classes, and have been well divided into the Gothic and Oriental. The former were an appendage of the Scandinavian mythology, and had their origin in the wish to fill up the void and uniformity of external nature. Their attributes, like those of their eastern sisters, were supernatural power and wisdom, but they were malevolent and revengeful in disposition, and disagreeable in person. They inhabited the heath-clad mountains, the chill lakes or piny solitudes of the north, and their lineal descendants were long in this country the objects of popular superstition.

The ærial beings, or Peris of the east, owed their imaginary existence to that warmth of fancy which induces us to communicate life to every object in nature. Beneficence and beauty were their characteristics. They lived in the sun or the rainbow, and subsisted on the odour of flowers. Their existence was not interminable, but was of unlimited duration.

A knowledge of these creatures of imagination, was introduced into Europe by the



crusaders, and the Moors of Spain. Their attributes and qualities were blended with those of the northern elf, though, as in every other species of romantic fiction, the eastern ideas were predominant.

Hence, a being was compounded for behoof of the poets and romancers of the age, which, according to local circumstances, to the information or fancy of the author, partook more or less of the Oriental or Gothic ingredients.

The notion of fairies was preserved during the middle ages. They act a conspicuous part in the Fabliaux of the Trouveurs, as the *Lai de Launval* and *Gruelan*. In the enumeration of the subjects of Breton Lais, contained in an old translation of *Lai Le Fraine*, we are told, that

“Many there beth of Faery.”

*Lancelot du Lac*, one of the most popular tales of chivalry, and in which the Lady of the Lake is the most interesting character, gave an *eclat* to the race of fairies in France. In the subsequent romance of *Isaië le Triste*, we have already seen that they came to act a part still more important and decisive. The story, too, of *Melusina*, which was written about the close of the 14th century, is a complete fairy tale. It was composed by Jean d'Arras, at the desire of the Duke de Berri, son of John, King of France, and is founded on an incident recorded in the archives of the family of Lusignan, which were in possession of the duke. In this story, a queen of Albania, who was endued with supernatural power, having taken umbrage at the conduct of her husband, retired with her daughter *Melusina*, then an infant, to the court of her sister, the Queen of the *Isle Perdue*. *Melusina*, as she grew up, was instructed in the rudiments of sorcery; and the first essay she made of her new-acquired art, was to shut up her father in the interior of a mountain. The mother, who still retained some affection for her husband, sentenced *Melusina*, as a punishment, to be changed every Sabbath into a serpent. This periodical metamorphosis was to continue till she met with a lover who would espouse her on condition of never intruding on her privacy during the weekly transformation; and she was prescribed on these days a course of salutary bathing, which, if duly persisted

in, might ultimately relieve her from this disgrace. *Melusina* accordingly set out in search of a husband, who would accede to these terms, and was in the first place received by the fairies of Poitou with due consideration. They introduced her to a nephew of the Count of Poitiers, who espoused her on the prescribed conditions. He soon became a wealthy and powerful lord, by the machinations of his wife, who was particularly skilful in the construction of impregnable castles; and one, of which she was the architect, afterwards appertained to her descendants the family of Lusignan. At length a brother of the count persuaded him that Sunday was reserved by his wife as a day of rendezvous with a lover. The prying husband having concealed himself in her apartment, beheld his wife making use of the enchanted bath. As soon as *Melusina* perceived the indiscreet intruder, she departed with a loud yell of lamentation. She has never since that period been visible to mortal eyes: Brantome, however, informs us that she haunts the castle of Lusignan, where she announces by loud shrieks any disaster that is to befall the French monarchy. The building she was supposed to have constructed was destroyed by the Duc de Montpensier, on account of its long and gallant resistance to his arms during the civil wars of France: but the family of Lusignan, till it sunk in that of Montmorenci Luxembourg, continued to bear for its crest, a woman bathing, in allusion to the story of *Melusina*.

Hitherto European fairies had not been sufficiently imposing in their attributes, nor gorgeous in their decorations, to attain universal popularity; but the Italian poets of the 15th and 16th centuries arrayed these creatures of imagination in all the embellishments which could be bestowed by poetical genius. They became more splendid and more interesting, and were prepared for that state in which they formed during some years a principal amusement of the most polished nation of Europe.

In the *Nights of Straparola*, which were translated from Italian into French with considerable embellishments, in 1585, we find examples not only of this mode of composition, but outlines of the best known and



most popular of the Fairy Tales, as *Le Chat Botté*, *Prince Marcassin*, *Blanchebelle*, *Fortunio*, &c. (See p. 270).

The immediate forerunner and prototype, however, of the French Fairy Tales, was the *Pentamerone* of Signor Basile, written in the Neapolitan jargon, and published in 1672. This work is divided into five days, each of which contains ten stories. The third of the first day, which is slightly altered from the first of the third of Straparola, may serve as an example of the close analogy that subsists between this work and the productions of Perrault and his imitators. A poor countryman, who dwelt in the neighbourhood of Salerno, was as remarkable for the deformity of his figure as the dulness of his understanding. One day, while employed in making up fagots in a wood, he perceives three damsels asleep, and erects over them a sort of shed, to screen them from the rays of the sun. When they awake, they inform him he had unwittingly obliged three powerful fairies, and promise in return that he shall at all times obtain of them whatever he may desire. The first use he makes of this unlimited credit is to wish that one of the fagots may be transformed into a horse. While riding home, he is ridiculed on account of his grotesque appearance, by the young Princess of Salerno, and he in revenge wishes that she may become pregnant. In due time she gives birth to twins, and the prince, her father, being greatly incensed, orders an assemblage of the male inhabitants of his dominions, in expectation that the children from instinct will give some indication of their origin. To the astonishment of the court, the uncouth peasant alone receives their unwelcome caresses. He is in consequence sentenced to be drifted to sea in a hogshead, along with the princess and her family. During their voyage, she learns for the first time the story of the adventure with the fairies, and the origin of her pregnancy. On hearing this, she immediately suggests that it would be highly expedient to transform their present awkward conveyance into a more commodious vessel. The wish being formed, the hogshead is of course converted into an elegant and self-directed pin-nace, which conveys them to a delightful spot on the shore of Calabria. There, on the for-

mation of a second wish, the boat is instantly changed into a magnificent palace. At the suggestion of the princess, her companion receives, by the same easy expedient, all possible graces of person and endowments of mind. Here the now happy pair spend many years of uninterrupted felicity; at length the Prince of Salerno, being one day carried to a great distance while engaged in the pleasures of the chase, arrives accidentally at this delightful residence, and is there reconciled to his daughter.

The fourth of the third day of the *Pentamerone*, is the origin of *L'Adroite Princesse*, the first fairy tale that appeared in France. This composition has been generally attributed to Charles Perrault, and is placed in some editions of his works. It is dedicated to Madame Murat, afterwards so celebrated for her excellence in similar productions, and is intended to inculcate the moral, that Idleness is the mother of vice, and Distrust of security. These maxims are exemplified in the following manner:—

A king, when setting out on a crusade, committed to a well-meaning fairy the charge of his three daughters, *Nonchalante*, *Babil-larde*, and *Finette*, names which are expressive of the characters of the princesses. These ladies were shut up in an inaccessible tower, and, at the king's request, the fairy formed three enchanted distaffs; one was bestowed on each princess, and each distaff was fated to fall to pieces, when she to whom it was assigned did any thing contrary to her reputation, of which it appeared to the king that his daughters could have very little opportunity.

At the top of the tower there was a pulley, by means of which the princesses let down a basket, to receive provisions, and whatever else they required.

After a short stay in this solitude, the two elder sisters began to grow weary. One day they pulled up in the hamper an old beggar-woman, whom they observed at the foot of the tower imploring their assistance. *Nonchalante* hoped she would act as a servant, and *Babillarde* was anxious to have some new person to talk with. This mendicant proved to be a neighbouring prince, who was a great enemy of the king, and had assumed this dis-



guise to avenge himself for certain injuries he had sustained. In prosecution of this plan, he made such assiduous court to the two elder sisters, that he soon effected the total destruction of their distaffs. Finette, whom he next importuned, eluded all his artifices: But while on death-bed, to which he was brought by the snares she laid for him, the prince made his younger brother swear to ask Finette in marriage, and murder her on the night of the nuptials.

Meanwhile the father arrived from his crusade, and immediately asked to see the distaffs of his daughters: Each in turn presented the still unbroken distaff of Finette, who had agreed to accommodate them with the loan of it for the occasion. But the king was not to be so easily satisfied, and, to the utter discomfiture of the guilty, demanded to examine them all at one view. The transgression of the elder princesses was thus detected, and they were sent to the palace of the fairy who framed the distaffs, where they were condemned, for a long course of years, the one to hard labour, and the other to silence. The rest of the tale is occupied with the devices by which Finette evaded the fate prepared for her by the younger brother of the betrayer of her sisters.

This tale, as already mentioned, is taken from the *Pentamerone*, and, I think, with little variation of machinery or incident, except that in the Italian work, instead of the distaffs, the princesses are presented with three rings, the brightness of which is the test of the possessor's chastity.

L'Adroite Princesse was succeeded by a volume of fairy tales, unquestionably written by Perrault. It appeared in 1697, and is dedicated to one of the royal family of France, as written by Perrault D'Armançour, one of the author's children. All that is contained in each of these stories will be remembered by every one on the mere mention of their titles. *La Barbe Bleue* has a striking resemblance to the story in the *Arabian Nights* of the third Calendar, who has all the keys of a magnificent castle entrusted to him, with injunctions not to open a certain apartment; he gratifies his curiosity, and is punished for his disobedience. It has been said, however, that the original Blue Beard was Gilles, Mar-

quis de Laval, a general in the reigns of Charles VI. and VII., distinguished by his military genius and intrepidity, and possessed of princely revenues, but addicted to magic, and infamous by the murder of his wives, and his extraordinary debaucheries. *La Belle au Bois Dormant* seems to have been suggested by the sleep of Epimenides; it is the best of the tales of Perrault, and first brought that species of writing into fashion. *Le Chat Botté* is from the 1st of the 11th night of Straparola, where the cat of Constantine procures his master a fine castle, and the heiress of a king. *Riquet à la Houpe* is also from Straparola, and the notion has been adopted and expanded by Madame Villeneuve, in the celebrated story *La Belle et la Bête*. In *Le Petit Poucet*, the residence with the ogre is taken from Ulysses in the cave of Polyphemus, or the 4th story of the first young man in the *Bahar Danush*, and the mode of extrication, from the mythological fable of Theseus and Ariadne. To each of these tales a moral is added in bad verse, and some sort of lesson may, no doubt, be extracted from most of them; thus, the scope of *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* is to warn young people to distrust flatterers; and that of *Barbe Bleue* to repress curiosity. In *Le Maître Chat*, ou *Le Chat Botté*, we learn that talents are equivalent to fortune; and from *Le Petit Poucet*, that, with spirit and address, the most defenceless of mankind may escape from the oppression of the most powerful.

The tales of Perrault are the best of the sort that have been given to the world. They are chiefly distinguished for their simplicity, for the *naïve* and familiar style in which they are written, and an appearance of implicit belief on the part of the relater, which perhaps gives us additional pleasure, from our knowledge of the profound attainments of the author, and his advanced age at the period of their composition.

Soon after the appearance of the tales of Perrault, and towards the close of the reign of Louis XIV., the court of France assumed a serious and moral aspect, and it became fashionable to write libraries for the instruction and amusement of his young and royal descendants. At the same time there were a number of ladies of considerable rank and fortune, who lived much together, and culti-



vated literature with some success. Every one was tired of the long romances ; they required too much time and application, and such novels as Marianne demanded too much genius for every lady of quality to attempt with any prospect of success. Fairy tales, like those of Perrault, were accordingly considered as best adapted to the entertainment and general reputation of the society.

The very circumstance, too, of such a man as Perrault having employed himself in this species of composition, rescued it from the imputation of childishness, with which it might have been otherwise stigmatised. That occupation could hardly be considered as a trivial employment for a woman of fashion, which had engaged the attention of a profound academician, and who had besides recommended this mode of writing to the female world, in the dedication to one of his tales :—

Les Fables plairont jusqu' aux plus grands esprits,  
Si vous voulez belle Comtesse,  
Par vos heureux talens orner de tels recits ;  
L'antique Gaule vous en presse :  
Daignez donc mettre dans leurs jours  
Les Contes ingenus quoique remplis d'adresse,  
Qu'ont inventé les Troubadours ;  
Le sens mystérieux que leur tour enveloppe  
Egale bien celui d'Esopé.

The Countess D'Aulnoy, Madame Murat, and Mademoiselle de la Force,<sup>1</sup> who were nearly contemporaries, and wrote in the very commencement of the 18th century, were the ladies chiefly eminent for this species of composition. In the tales of Perrault, the decorations of marvellous machinery are sparingly employed. The moral is principally kept in view, and supernatural agency is only introduced where, by this means, the lesson meant to be conveyed can be more successfully inculcated. But the three ladies now before us seem to have vied with each other in excluding nature from their descriptions, and to have written under the impression, that she must bear away the palm whose palace was lighted by the greatest profusion of carbuncles, whose dwarf was most diminutive and hideous, and whose chariot was drawn by the most unearthly monsters. Events bordering on pro-

bability were carefully abstained from, and the most marvellous thing in these tales, as Fontenelle has remarked, is, when a person shipwrecked in the middle of the ocean has the misfortune to be drowned.

The tales of the Countess D'Aulnoy, who is the most voluminous of all fairy writers, want the simplicity of those of Perrault, but possess a good deal of wit and liveliness. Her best stories are *L'Oiseau Bleue*, and *Le Prince Lutin*, which is perhaps the most airy and sprightly tale in the *Bibliothèque Bleue*. She has also written *La Belle aux Cheveux d'or*, *Le Rameau d'or*, and *Gracieuse et Percinet*, which seems to have been suggested by the tasks imposed on Psyche, in the story of Cupid and Psyche in Apuleius. A good many, as *Fortunée*, *Le Nain Jaune*, *Le Biche au Bois*, are introduced as episodes of two Spanish novels, entitled *Ponce de Leon*, and *Don Ferdinand de Toledo*, of which the first is a most beautiful and romantic story. Still more numerous are the tales enclosed in the frame of a story, entitled *Le Gentilhomme Bourgeois*, of which *La Chatte Blanche* is the best, though also the most wonderful. In the incidents of these tales there is little invention, most of them being taken, with scarce any variation, from the *Pentamerone* of Basile, or the *Nights of Straparola*. Thus, for example, in the first of the second night, there is the story of a queen of England, who was inconsolable for her want of children. At length, three fairies traverse the air while she is asleep. The first decrees that her majesty should become pregnant of a son, the second that the prince should be endued with every moral and intellectual perfection, but the third determines that he should come into the world in the shape of a pig, and that he should retain this unfortunate figure until he had married three wives, and received the voluntary caresses of the last. The prince, as was to be expected, wallows in the mire in his early years, and is a great expense for perfumes to his governess and valet de chambre. When full-grown he is successively united to two ladies, who attempt to murder him, in consequence of which a separation takes place. His mental accomplishments, however, at length so far engage the affections of a beautiful princess, that she overlooks the personal disadvantages

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, No. 33.



under which he laboured, and by this means her husband acquires the shape more usually borne by his species. This story will be at once recognised as *Le Prince Marcassin* of Mad. D'Aulnoy. Her other imitations from Straparola have been pointed out while treating of the works of that novelist. (See p. 270).

In the tales of Madame Murat, there is neither the simplicity of those of Perrault, nor the liveliness of those of D'Aulnoy. She writes *Le Parfait amour—Anguilette—Jeune et Belle*. Her best is *Le Palais de Vengeance*, where an enchanter, being enamoured of a princess who refused to requite his affection, shut her up in a delicious palace, with the lover for whose sake she had rejected his suit. Here, as the magician expected, they were speedily reduced to a state of *ennui*, resembling that of Mad. du Deffand and the President Henault, during the day which they had agreed to devote to each other's society.

Mademoiselle de la Force, who is author of *Plus belle que Feé, L'Enchanteur, Tourbillon, Vert et Bleue*, has outdone all her competitors in marvellous extravagance. Enchanted palaces of opal or diamond were becoming vulgar accommodations, and this lady introduced the luxury of a palace flying from place to place, with all its pleasure grounds and gardens along with it.

Though the tales of the three ladies above mentioned are very different in point of style, there runs through them a great uniformity of incident. The principal characters are in the most exalted situations of life, they are either paragons of beauty or monsters of deformity; and if there be more than one princess in a family, the youngest, as in the case of *Psyche*, is invariably the most amiable and most lovely. Fairies, who aid or overturn the schemes of mortals, are an essential ingredient. The tale usually begins with the accouchement of a queen, at which some fairy presides, or is indignant at not having presided, and generally ends with the nuptials of an enamoured prince and princess. It commonly happens that the lady is shut up in an enchanted palace. Hence the sagacity and valour of a prince are employed for her deliverance, and in this enterprise he must be aided by a benevolent fairy, whom he has

most likely propitiated by services unwittingly performed when she was in the shape of some degraded animal. Love and envy are the only passions brought into action: all the distresses arise from confinement, metamorphosis, or the imposition of unreasonable tasks.

About the same period with these ladies, a number of inferior writers, as the authors of *La Tyrannie des Fées détruite*, and *Contes moins contes que les autres*, attempted similar compositions. They were more recently followed in the *Boca ou la Vertu Recomposé* of Mad. Marchand, written in 1735; as also in *Le Prince Invisible* and *le Prince des Aigues Marins* of Mad. Leveque, whose tales are remarkable for the fine verses introduced, and the delicacy of the sentiments. *Les Feeries Nouvelles* is the title of a number of tales by the Count de Caylus, who, leaving the Egyptians, Etruscans, and Gauls, has related his stories with a simplicity, *naïveté*, and sarcastic exposure of foibles in character, which could hardly be expected from one who had laboured so much in the mines of antiquity. *Les Contes Marins* de Mad. Villeneuve, published in 1740, are so termed because related by an old woman to a family while on their passage to St Domingo. The best known of these tales is *La Belle et La Bête*, the first part of which, perhaps, surpasses all that has been produced by the lively and fertile imaginations of France or Arabia. *Les Soirées Bretonnes*, by Gueulette, so well known by his numerous imitations of the eastern tales, also possessed considerable reputation. This volume is partly imitated from an Italian work, entitled *Peregrinaggio de tre figliuoli del Re de Serendippo*, and the stories it contains are feigned to have been related in the course of a number of evenings, to relieve the melancholy of a princess of Britany, as those in the *Peregrinaggio* had been told to console Sultan Behram for the loss of his favourite queen, whom that Mirror of Justice and Mercy had condemned to be torn to pieces by lions on account of an ill-timed jest on his skill in archery. The search for the Cynogefore, in the *Soirées Bretonnes*, and which also occurs in the Italian work, has given rise to the pursuit of the bitch and the horse, a well known incident in Voltaire's *Zadig*. There is also, both in the *Peregrinaggio* and *Soirées Bretonnes*, the story of



an eastern king who possessed the power of animating a dead body by flinging his own soul into it; but having incautiously shot himself into the carcase of a fawn which he had killed while hunting, his favourite vizier, to whom he had confided the secret whereby this transmigration was accomplished, occupied the royal corpse, which had been thus left vacant, and returned to the palace, where he personated his master. At length the king had an opportunity of passing into the remains of a parrot, in which shape he allowed himself to be taken captive and presented to the queen. The vizier afterwards, in order to gratify her majesty by a display of his mysterious science, animated the carcase of a favourite bird which had died, when the king seized the opportunity of re-entering his own body, which the vizier had now abandoned, and instantly twisted off the neck of his treacherous minister.

This story is so universal that it has been also related, with a slight variation of circumstances, in the *Bahar Danush* (c. 45 and 46),—in the *Persian Tales*, whence it has been copied in No. 578 of the *Spectator*,—in a mystical romance by Francis Beroalde, and in the *Illustres Feés*, under title of *Le Bienfaisant ou Quiribirini*. The last mentioned collection contains a good many other fairy tales, which have become well known and popular. Few of them, however, have been invented by the authors;—*Blanchebelle* is taken from the third of the third night of *Straparola*, and *Fortunio* from the fourth of the third of the same novelist. (See p. 270).

Besides those that have been enumerated, there were an infinite number of tales inserted in the *Mercur de France*, many of which were anonymous, and afterwards appeared in different collections, as *La Bibliotheque des Feés et des Genies*, by the *Abbe de la Porte*. The most eminent men in France disdained not to contribute to these collections, as appears from *La Reine Fantasque* of *Rousseau*, the *Aglæ ou Nabotine* of the *Painter Coypel*, and the *Acajou et Zirphile* of *M. Duclos*.

I may here mention, though they can hardly be denominated fairy tales, the *Veilles de Thessalie* of *Mad. de Lussan*, which are chiefly stories of incantation and magic. They turn on what once formed the popular superstitions of *Thessaly*, and those enchantments, of which

illusion is the chief, supposed to have been practised by certain persons in that part of Greece. The work of *Apuleius* probably suggested that of *Madame Lussan*. It is strange she has had no imitators, considering the novel and impressive machinery she has made use of, and the admirable manner in which in some of the stories, especially the first, it has been employed by her.

Every person is aware of the wonderful popularity which those productions, known by the name of *Contes des Feés*, enjoyed for many years in France. The *Comte de Caylus* says, in his preface to *Cadichon*, written in 1768, "*Les Contes des Feés ont été long tems à la mode, et dans ma jeunesse on ne lisoit gueres que cela dans le monde.*"

A species of tale of a totally different tone from that with which we have been engaged, and which had its foundation in eastern manners and mythology, was also prevalent in France at the same period with the fairy tales of European birth. These oriental fictions had their origin in the encouragement extended to Asiatic literature in the reign of *Louis XIV.*, the eagerness with which the translations of the Arabian and Persian tales were received by the public, and the facility afforded to this species of composition by the information concerning eastern manners, communicated in the *Bibliotheque Orientale* of *D'Herbelot*, and the *Travels* of *Chardin*.

In the eastern mythology, those imaginary beings, believed to be intermediate between God and man, are more numerous, and their attributes more striking, than in the superstitions of any other region. It was believed that before the creation of Adam the world was inhabited by genii, of whom some were called *Peris* and others *Dives*. Of these, the former were beautiful in person and amiable in disposition, and were contrasted with the latter, who were of inauspicious appearance and malevolent temper. After the formation of man, these beings retired in a great measure from earth to a region of their own, called *Ginnistan*, a very remote empire, but continued occasionally to intermeddle in sublunary affairs—the *Peris* employing themselves for the benefit, and the *Dives* for the ruin, of mankind. Both frequently instructed mortals in their arts or knowledge, who thus



became enchanters or magicians, and were evil or well disposed, according to the frame of mind of their teachers. This mythology is the foundation of those eastern tales, which produced so many imitations in France. Next to this species of machinery, the most characteristic feature of these compositions is the peculiar manners and state of society delineated, especially that despotism which regards as nothing the lives and fortunes of mankind, and which, even without the intervention of supernatural agency, produces a quick transition from misfortune to prosperity, or from a state of the highest elevation to one of complete dejection.

The indolence peculiar to the genial climates of Asia, and the luxurious life which the kings and other great men led in their seraglios, made them seek for this species of amusement, and set a high value on the recreation it afforded. Being ignorant, and consequently credulous, and having little passion for moral improvement, or knowledge of nature, they did not require that these tales should be probable or of an instructive tendency: it was enough if they were astonishing. Hence, most oriental tales are extravagant, and their incidents are principally carried on by prodigy. As the taste, too, of the hearers was not improved by studying the simplicity of nature, and as they chiefly piqued themselves on the splendour of their equipage, and the vast quantity of jewels and curious things which they could heap together in their repositories, the authors, conformably to this taste, expatiate with peculiar delight in the description of magnificence, of rich robes and gaudy furniture, costly entertainments, and sumptuous palaces.

Of all eastern stories, the most celebrated, at least in Europe, are the Arabian Tales, or the Thousand and One Nights. These are supposed to have been written after the period of the Arabian conquests in the west, and probably between the end of the 13th and close of the 14th century. It may, indeed, be fairly conjectured that they were not composed till the military spirit of the Arabians had in some degree abated. Heroes and soldiers perform no part in these celebrated tales of wonder, and the only classes of men exhibited are cadis, merchants, calenders, and

slaves. In the story, too, of the Barber, some event is recorded as having happened during the reign of Monstancer Billah, the thirty-sixth caliph of the race of the Abassides, and who was raised to that dignity in the 623d year of the Hegira, that is, in 1226. Whether the Arabian Nights are a collection of oriental romances, or the production of a single genius, has been much disputed. It is most likely that they were written in their present form by one individual, but that, like the Decameron, or Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, the incidents were borrowed from various sources—the traditions of Arabia, and even of Persia, Hindostan, and Greece. The story of Polyphemus is in the third voyage of Sinbad. Other parts of the adventures of that bold mariner seem to be borrowed from the History of Aristomenes, in Pausanias; and we also find incorporated in the Arabian Tales, the traditions concerning Phædra and Circe, and the story of Joseph with characteristic decorations.

The Heeotopades had probably suggested to the Arabian writer the idea of enclosing his stories in a frame, and from his example this plan has been adopted in all similar compositions. The frame of the Arabian Tales is less complex and involved than that of the Heeotopades, but is not very ingenious. A sultan, as is well known, irritated by the infidelity of his wife, resolves to espouse a new sultana every evening, and to strangle her in the morning, to prevent the accidents of the day. At length the daughter of the vizier solicits the hand of this indulgent bridegroom, interrupts the progress of these frequent and sanguinary nuptials, and saves her own life by the relation of tales, in which she awakens and suspends the sultan's curiosity. Her husband was perhaps as childish in his clemency as absurd in his cruelty, yet the stories are so interesting, that, as a French critic has remarked, there is no one but would have insisted to learn the conclusion, could he have exclaimed with his majesty, "*Je la ferai toujours bien mourir demain.*" The stories are too well known, and too numerous, to admit of analysis; their chief merit consists in the admirable delineation of eastern manners, the knavery of slaves, the hypocrisy of dervises, the corruption of judges, the



baneful influence of that despotism which has remained the same amid all Asiatic revolutions, and the boldness and artifice of the women, who risk so much the more in proportion to the rigour with which they are confined. The sultana, indeed, which has been considered a defect in these tales, seems merely intent on saving her life, and appears to have had no design, by the tendency of the stories, to convince her husband of the fidelity and virtue of woman.

In the Persian Tales, on the other hand, where there is a princess as much preposessed against the male sex as the sultan in the Arabian Nights against the female, the scope of all the stories is to persuade the fair one that there exist such things as lasting attachment and conjugal felicity. A princess of Caschmire was of such resplendent beauty, that all who had the misfortune to behold her lost their reason, or fell into a languishing state, by which they were insensibly destroyed. The king, her father, soon perceived that his dominions were about to be depopulated, or converted into a capacious bedlam. He, therefore, shut up his daughter in a tower, and engaged her nurse to overcome her aversion to matrimony by the relation of tales, most of which, accordingly, furnish some example of a faithful lover or affectionate husband. The delicacy of the princess is never to be satisfied, and she has always some exception to make against the tenderness or ardour of attachment in the hero of the tale. This gives rise to a new narrative, in which the nurse attempts to realize the *beau idéal* of her fastidious *élève*; but it requires the stories of a thousand and one days to overcome her obduracy. In these tales there is more delicacy, but less vigour and invention, than in the Arabian; which is, perhaps, consistent with the character and genius of the nations by which they were produced. It is ascertained that they were written at a period long subsequent to the Arabian Nights. They are also supposed to be the work of a dervis, which has been inferred from the number of traditions drawn from Mahometan mythology, and that hatred which the stories breathe to the religion of the magi, which was overthrown by the successors of the prophet.

The Arabian and Persian tales were trans-

lated into French, the former by Galland, the latter by Petis de la Croix and Le Sage, and were published in the beginning of the 18th century. Both have been manufactured for the European market, and additional wonders and enchantments woven into them:—

Et, loin de se perdre en chemin,  
Parurent sortant de chez Barbin  
Plus Arabe qu' en Arabie.

Petis de la Croix is also the translator of *L'Histoire de la Sultane de Perse et des Visirs, Contes Turcs*, a work founded on the story of Erastus, or the Seven Wise Masters, and attributed to Checzade, preceptor of Amurath second. In this collection we have the story of Santon Barsisa, a holy man, who had spent his life in a grotto in fasting and prayer. He obtained the reputation of a chosen favourite of heaven, and it was believed that when he made vows for the health of a sick person, the patient was immediately cured. The daughter of the king of the country being seized with a dangerous illness, was sent to the Santon, to whom the devil presented himself on this occasion. Our hermit, yielding to his suggestion, declared that it was necessary for her cure that the princess should pass the night in the hermitage. This being agreed to, "Le Santon," says the French translation, "*dementit en un moment une vertu de cent années!*" He is led from the commission of one crime to another: to conceal his shame he murders the princess, buries her body at the entrance of the grotto, and informs her attendants, on their return in the morning, that she had already left the hermitage. The dead body is afterwards discovered by information of the devil, and the Santon is brought to condign punishment. In this situation the demon appears, and promises to bear him away if he consent to worship him; but the Evil Spirit has no sooner received a sign of adoration, than he leaves Barsisa to the mercy of the executioner.

This tale was originally told by Saadi, the celebrated Persian poet, in a species of sermon, where it is quoted as a parable, along with other ingenious and applicable stories. It was imitated in Europe at an early period, in one of the *Contes Devots*, entitled *de L'Hermite que le Diable trompa*, a tale of which Le Grand enumerates four different versions



(vol. v. p. 229). From the Turkish Tales it was at length inserted in the Guardian, and became the origin of Lewis's Monk, where Ambrosio, a monk of the highest reputation for eloquence and sanctity in Madrid, is persuaded by an evil spirit in human shape to violate the beautiful Antonia, and afterwards to murder her, in order that his guilt might be concealed. These crimes being detected, he is hurried to the dungeons of the Inquisition, where the devil being invoked, agrees to deliver him from confinement, on condition that he should make over his soul to him in perpetuity. Ambrosio having ratified this contract, is borne away in the talons of the demon, who afterwards tears and dashes him to pieces amid the cliffs of the Sierra Morena.

The History of Dr Faustus, as it has been dramatized by Goethe, is a similar tale. Faustus, a wise and learned man, is amorously tempted by the devil, and after being led by his suggestion from one excess to another, is finally carried off by him to perdition.

The stupendous incident and gorgeous machinery of the oriental tales soon attracted notice, and made a strong impression on the fancy. Figurative style, and wild invention, are easily imitated. Manners, which are marked and peculiar, but of which the minute shades are not very accurately known, are easily described. Accordingly, the imitators of oriental fiction have given us abundance of jewels and eunuchs, cadis, necromancers, and slaves. Their personages are all Mahometans or Pagans, who are subject to the despotic sway of caliphs, bashaws, and viziers, who drink sherbet, rest on sofas, and ride on camels or dromedaries.

Gueulette is the principal French imitator of oriental tales. He is the author of *Les mille et un quart d'heure*, *Contes Tartares*, which resemble the Persian and Arabian tales, both in the frame by which they are introduced, and the nature of the stories themselves.

A dervis, who, we are told by this author, dwelt in the neighbourhood of Astracan, returning one evening to his cell, found it occupied by a new-born infant. He confided the child to the wife of a tailor of Astracan, from whom he was accustomed to receive alms. The foundling was called Schems-Eddin, and was brought up to the trade of

his reputed father. In his youth he is seen and admired by one of the fair inhabitants of the seraglio, and is privately sent for on pretence that she wishes him to make her a habit. At one of the interviews which follow this message, he is surprised by the arrival of the king, who, when about to sacrifice the lovers to his jealousy, is himself slain by Schems-Eddin. It is now ascertained, by an account given by an old sultana, that Schems-Eddin is the son of the King of Astracan, whom he had just killed, and that he had been exposed in his infancy in consequence of the prediction of an astrologer, that he was destined to murder his father. Schems-Eddin ascends the throne of Astracan, and espouses the object of his affections, but being still tormented with remorse for the involuntary assassination of his parent, he sets out with his sultana on a pilgrimage of expiation to Mecca. While returning the sultana falls sick, and being believed dead she is enclosed in a magnificent coffin. The sultan is next attacked by a tribe of Bedouin Arabs; he is left for dead on the plain, and deprived of the coffin in which his consort was enshrined. On his arrival at Astracan, he finds his throne occupied by an usurper, his eyes are put out, and he is thrown into a dungeon. A counter-revolution restores him to power and liberty, but his physicians in vain attempt to find a remedy for his blindness. At length one of their number declares that in the Isle of Serendib (Ceylon) there is a tree, and on that tree sat a bird, round whose neck hung a phial containing a liquor, which was a specific in the most obdurate cases of ophthalmia. The physician is despatched to procure a supply of this liquor. During his absence the king was accustomed to pass an hour in public, and a fourth part of this space was devoted to conversation with sages, or spent in listening to the adventures of those strangers who frequented his court. His viziers, however, began to be afraid that this fund of amusement would be at length exhausted. Accordingly, the son of the physician who had gone to Serendib, and who, it seems, was a great reader, and possessed a retentive memory, undertook to amuse his majesty till the return of his father, by the relation of stories for a quarter of an hour each day.



In the tales thus introduced there is little originality of invention. The machinery and decorations are borrowed from oriental tales, and a great number of the incidents from the *Nights of Straparola*. *L'Histoire de Sinadab fils du Medecin Sacan* is from the first tale in that work. An old man recommended to his son never to attach himself to a prince, never to reveal a secret to his wife, nor to foster a child of which he was not the father. Sinadab, however, by his talents and virtues, became the chief favourite of a monarch, whose sister he espoused; and, having no children, he brought up the son of one of his slaves as his own. He was now completely happy and prosperous, and laughed at the dotage of his father. In course of time he revealed a trifling transgression as a secret to his wife. She immediately informed her brother, and he was instantly condemned to death by his ungrateful master. So popular, however, had been his character, that no one could be found to cut off his head, till Roumy, his adopted son, voluntarily offered to perform this office. In *Straparola*, a Genoese merchant gives similar advice to his son, and his neglect of it is attended with like consequences. The story of *Le Chien de Sahed* and *Cadi of Candahar*, is a tale already mentioned, as occurring in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, and in an infinite number of other fabulous productions (see p. 289). *Les Bossus de Damas* is from the fabliau *Les Trois Bossus*, and *Le Centaure Bleue* from the 1st of the 4th of *Straparola*. A few, as the history of *Feridoun* and *Mahalem*, King of Borneo, are told by *Khondemir*, and other oriental writers. *L'Histoire de Faruk*, where a son refuses to contend with his brothers for the sovereignty, by shooting an arrow at the dead body of his father, is the *Fabliau Le Jugement de Solomon* (*Le Grand*, vol. ii. p. 426), or 45th chapter of *Gesta Romanorum*. Another part of the same story, where a judge discovers that his son had been guilty of a robbery, by a ring which he had obtained from him, is from the tale related in the *Arabian Nights* by a Jew physician (see vol. ii. N. 156). The story *Du vieux Calender* corresponds with the *Two Dreams* in the *Seven Wise Masters*, and with the *Fabliau Le Chevalier a la Trappe*. It is a curious coincidence in fiction, that these three stories are the same with

the plot of the *Miles Gloriosus* of *Plautus*, said to be taken from a Greek play, entitled *Αλαζων*.

*L'Histoire d'Alcouz, Taher, et du Meunier*, which contains an exaggerated picture of female infidelity, is precisely the fifth novel of the *Printemps* of *Jaques Yver*, printed in 1575.

These tales chiefly turn on sudden vicissitudes and changes of fortune. They are far inferior to the genuine eastern tales, but are regarded as the best of the French imitations.

The stories are at length terminated by the return of the physician with the precious eye-water. On arriving at Ceylon, the emissary found that the tree could only be ascended in safety by a woman who had never failed in fidelity to her husband. No one was willing to risk the experiment, but it was at length undertaken by the sultana of Astracan, who, though believed dead by her husband, had been discovered to be alive by the Arabs. Having escaped from their power, but having missed her way, she had arrived at the court of the King of Ceylon on her road from Arabia to Astracan. She now accompanied the physician to the empire of her husband, who prized the salutary medicine she brought, not merely as a restorative to sight, but as an unexceptionable testimony to the unaltered affections of his sultana.

*Gueulette* is also author of *Les Contes Chinois, ou les Aventures merveilleuses du Mandarin Fum-Hoam*. These tales are introduced in the following manner:—An emissary is despatched by a Chinese monarch to Circassia, with orders to procure for his master the most beautiful females of that country. He returns with a large and well-chosen selection, and accompanied at the same time by the King and Princess of Georgia, whom he had met in the course of his mission, and to whom, as they had been expelled their kingdom by an usurper, he had offered an asylum at his residence in Tonquin. The Chinese monarch beholds with perfect indifference the compliant beauties of Circassia, but becomes deeply enamoured of the Georgian refugee. Anxious, however, to ascertain if he can gain her affections, divested of the lustre of a diadem, he attempts to win her heart in the assumed character of the brother of her host, while she is, at the same



time, courted by a mandarin, who was instructed to personate his sovereign. When the triumph of the Georgian princess is completed by her acceptance of the offer, apparently least advantageous, she is united to her royal lover under his true name and character. The new queen stipulates for enjoyment of a free exercise of the Mahometan religion, but her husband, at the same time, undertakes to convert her to the doctrines of Chacabout (especially that part of them in which the belief of the transmigration of souls was inculcated, the point on which she chiefly stickled), by means of the sage discourses of the mandarin Fum-Hoam. This personage is every evening summoned into the august presence of his mistress, and relates with much gravity the various adventures which he had experienced in the different bodies his soul had animated, of every sex and situation. He had also occasionally passed into the form of inferior animals, as lap-dogs and fleas, which gave him an opportunity of witnessing and relating the most secret adventures.

Les Sultanes de Guzaratte, ou Les Songes des Hommes éveillés, Contes Mogols, is from the same prolific pen as the Chinese and Ta-tar Tales. The sultan of Guzaratte, a district in the Mogul empire, had four wives, with whom he lived, and who lived together for many years in the utmost harmony. Smitten at length with the charms of a Circassian beauty, he associates her in the empire, and, in a great measure, withdraws his confidence and affection from the elder sultanas. At the end of fifteen years he begins to doubt the fidelity of his Circassian favourite, and in some degree to repent of the neglect with which he had treated her rivals. Wishing to discover their secret thoughts and sentiments, he consults a celebrated cabalist, by whose advice he transports his wives to a palace, so constructed that from a certain apartment every thing was seen and heard that was done or said in the interior of the building. The sultanas being lodged in this magical dwelling, their husband next spreads a report of his death, and occasionally repairs to the palace, in order to witness, unseen, the manner in which they pass the days of their imagined widowhood. After the period of mourning is elapsed, the sultanas employ certain persons to watch at

the caravansary, to give the travellers who arrive a sleeping potion, and bear them to the palace, in order that on the following day they might entertain these ladies with a detail of their adventures. All the tales in the work are stories thus introduced. The last party conveyed to the residence of the sultanas consist of a company of dancers and comedians, one of whom the Circassian espouses, to the great indignation of the sultan.

Les Contes Orientaux of the Count de Caylus, are related to a king of Persia, afflicted with a *coma vigil*, in order to lull him asleep. In this work, L'Histoire de la Corbeille, which is announced as "plus longue que celle de Ferredbaad," and "plus triste que celle de Wamakweazra," is the story of a prosperous and happy monarch, at whose court a dervis arrives, plunged in profound melancholy. The king being desirous to learn the occasion of his sadness, is informed by him that he can only ascertain its cause by repairing to a certain city in China. Thither the sultan departs, and on his arrival finds all its inhabitants overwhelmed with affliction. His curiosity being thus still farther excited, by the instructions of one of them, he throws himself into a basket which hung suspended over the walls of a ruinous castle, and is forthwith carried up with velocity to a delightful region, where he passes his time in all imaginable pleasures, and in the society of a woman of angelic charms. After a time he is let down in the basket to this lower region, for the amusements of which he has now lost all relish, and, like the dervis, passes the remainder of his days in vexation and disappointment, at the loss of those exquisite enjoyments of which he had partaken, and by which all others were rendered tasteless. This story, which was originally intended as a moral fiction, to show that God has dealt mercifully with mankind, in not vouchsafing a clearer revelation of the joys of eternity, has prevailed all over the world, from the traditions of the Brahmins to the mythology of Scandinavia. It is related at full length in the story of Yezzez, contained in the 38th and two following chapters of the Bahar-Danush, and in the 19th fable of the Edda, where we are told that "Frey having ascended the throne of the Universal Father, and entered a magnificent



palace in the middle of the city, saw a woman come out of it, whose hair was so bright that it gave lustre to the air and waters. At that sight, Frey, in punishment of his audacity in mounting that sacred throne, was struck with sudden sadness, insomuch, that after his descent he could neither speak, nor sleep, nor drink."

The tales of Count Hamilton, Fleur d'Epine and Les quatre Facardins, are chiefly intended as a satire on the taste then prevalent for oriental fiction. Fleur d'Epine is introduced as the last night of the Arabian Tales, and is related by the sister of the sultana. We are told, that a princess of Caschmire was so resplendently beautiful, that all who beheld her were struck blind or perished, a commencement intended to ridicule the early part of the Persian tales. A prince in disguise, who, at this time, resided with the king's seneschal, offers, by the assistance of a fairy, to overcome the baleful effects, without diminishing the lustre of her charms. The fairy, to whom he alluded, had promised him this remedy on condition that he should rescue her daughter Fleur d'Epine, from the power of a malevolent enchantress, and should also dispossess her enemy of the musical horse and the cap of light. The story is occupied with this achievement, and the amours of Fleur d'Epine and the prince.

Les quatre Facardins, which is partly a fairy tale and partly a romance of chivalry, contains the adventures of the Prince of Trebizonde, the lover of Dinarzade. It is intended as a general satire on all incredible adventures, but is far inferior in merit to Fleur d'Epine.

To the class of fairy and oriental tales may be referred that species of composition which in France was known under the title of Voyages Imaginaires, and which, in an historical account of fictitious writing, it would not be proper altogether to neglect. These productions bear the same relation to real voyages and travels as the common novel or romance to history and biography. They have been written with different views, but are generally intended to exhibit descriptions, events, and subjects of instruction, which are not furnished by the scenes or manners of the real world. In some cases, as in Robinson Crusoe, mankind are led to appreciate their own exertions

by seeing what their species is capable of when in perfect solitude, and abandoned to its own resources. In l' Isle Inconnue they are shown what they may attain when confined to domestic society, and excluded from all intercourse with the rest of the world. Sometimes the imaginary traveller is received among nations of perfect and ideal wisdom. At others, the author, seizing the advantages presented by shipwrecks and pirates, throws his characters on some inhospitable shore, the fancied distance of which entitles him to people it with all sorts of prodigies and monsters. The planets, too, and centre of the earth were made the theatres of these chimerical expeditions, which, even in their most common form, are entertaining; and in their more improved state have sometimes become, as in the case of the celebrated work of Swift, the vehicle of the keenest satire, and even of philosophical research.

The origin of this species of fiction may be attributed to the True History of Lucian. Homer's Odyssey, however, in which that poet talks of the Anthropophagi and giants with one eye in their forehead, is the remote original of this sort of fabling. Ctesias, the Cnidian, reported many incredible tales in his history of the Indians, and Iamblichus still more equivocal relations in his Wonders of the Sea. These persons, however, were *bona fide* historians, or at least were serious in wishing to impose on their readers. The work of Lucian is the first that is professedly fabulous, though no doubt suggested by the false relations of these writers. Indeed, the satirist himself acquaints us that every thing he says glances at some one of the old poets or historians who have recorded untruths which are incredible.

Lucian relates, that, prompted by curiosity, he sailed from the pillars of Hercules and launched into the western ocean. For some time he had a prosperous voyage, but was at length overtaken by a tempest, which, after two months' continuance, drove him on a delightful island, where he saw many wonders. The rivers there were of wine, and the summit of the trees were women from the waist upwards; to these a few of the crew were for ever transfixed by hazarding some gallantries. Those mariners who with Lucian again



launched into the deep, were speedily carried into the air by a whirlwind, and borne with immense velocity towards a shining land, which, on reaching it, they discovered to be the moon. They were here saluted by men riding on monstrous vultures, who conducted them to the court of their king, who proved to be the well-known Endymion. That prince was engaged in a war with Phaeton, king of the Sun; the two potentates having quarrelled with regard to their right of colonizing the Morning Star. The strangers were graciously received by his lunar majesty, who begged their assistance in the ensuing campaign, and, as an inducement, offered to furnish each with a prime vulture. This proposition being agreed to, Lucian set out with the lunar army and auxiliaries from the constellation of the Bear, who were mounted on fleas of the dimensions of elephants. A swarm of spiders, which accompanied the army, was detached to weave between the moon and morning star a web, which, when formed, was chosen as the field of battle. Here the troops of Endymion encountered the enemy, composed of the solar battalions and the allies from Sirius. In the engagement Lucian's friends were worsted, their king taken prisoner, and Lucian himself along with him. On the conclusion of peace, he attempted to return to the moon, but was driven into the sea, where he was swallowed up by a whale, in whose interior there are immense regions, with forests and cities, and wars are carried on by the inhabitants. Lucian and his companions at length extricated themselves by setting fire to the woods, which consumed the monster. They next sailed through a sea of milk, and came to an island of cheese, &c. &c.

In the true history of Lucian, the satire is too broad and exaggerated. His work is a heap of extravagancies, put together without order or unity, and his wonders are destitute of every colour of plausibility. "Animal trees," says Dr Beattie in his excellent Essay on Poetry, "ships sailing in the sky—armies of monstrous things travelling between the sun and moon on a pavement of cobwebs—rival nations of men inhabiting woods and mountains in a whale's belly, are liker the dreams of a bedlamite than the inventions of a rational being."

The spirit of those extravagant relations satirised by Lucian never was extinguished, and fictitious embellishments were mingled even with genuine narrative. The inclination for the marvellous, which prevailed during the dark ages, was not confined to romances of chivalry, but pervaded every department of literature and science. This led to a similar style in the relations of those travellers who described remote countries. Such productions would have been little attractive to their readers, unless filled with wonders of nature and superhuman productions of art. Accordingly, Benjamin, a Jew of Tudela, who penetrated through Persia to the frontiers of China, about the middle of the 12th century, and Marco Polo, a Venetian nobleman, who visited the same regions a hundred years afterwards, related in the account of their travels many marvellous and romantic stories. The work of Mandeville was translated in the 15th century into almost all the languages of the continent, and was published in the collection of Ramusio. At the same time the *Mirabilia mundi* of Solinus, which contains many wonderful relations in the style of the *Voyages Imaginaires*, was early translated into French, and became a popular work.

The Travels of Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, whom Addison terms a person of infinite adventure and unbounded imagination, was the type of incidents which were indeed professedly fictitious, but which were scarcely more incredible.

We also meet with an example of the more philosophical class of the *Voyages Imaginaires* in the Arabian story of Hai Ebn Yokdhan, written by Ebn-Tophail, a Mahometan philosopher, who was contemporary with Averroes, and lived towards the close of the 12th century, in some part of the Saracenic dominions in Spain. This work was translated by Moses Narbonensis into Hebrew, and into Latin by Mr Pococke, 1671. There have been several English versions through the medium of the Latin, and one from the original Arabic by Simon Ockley, published in 1708.

In the spiritual romance of Josaphat and Barlaam, we have beheld a prince immured from the world, gradually acquire, by meditation, moral notions and ideas of disease and



of death. Previous, also, to the time of Ebn-Tophail, and in the beginning of the 11th century, this system of self-improvement had been exemplified in a tract by the celebrated Avicenna, whose work is an outline of that of Ebn-Tophail. In the sketch by Avicenna, it is feigned that a human being was produced in a delightful but uninhabited island, without the intervention of mortal parents, by mere concourse of the elements—a notion not unlike the systems of Democritus and Epicurus, as explained by Lucretius (B. 2). The being, hatched in this unusual manner, though destitute of instruction, obtained, by exertion, what was most essential to personal convenience, and finally arrived, by meditation, at the abstract truths of religion. This idea has been more fully developed by Ebn-Tophail, whose chief design is to show that human capacity, unassisted by external help, may not only supply outward wants, but attain to a knowledge of all objects of nature, and so, by degrees, discover a dependence on a superior being, the immortality of the soul, and other doctrines necessary to salvation.

We are told by this Arabian writer, that there was an island in the Indian Ocean, and lying under the equinoctial line, which was governed by a king of proud and tyrannical disposition. This prince had a sister of exquisite beauty, whom he confined in a tower, and restrained from marriage, because he could not match her with one suitable to her quality. Nevertheless this lady had been privately espoused by a young man of the name of Yokdhan, and, in consequence of this union, gave birth to a son. Dreading the resentment of her brother, she set the child afloat in a little chest, which the tide carried on the same night to an uninhabited island at no great distance. As the tide rose higher than usual, it deposited the chest in a shady grove, which stood near the shore, and there left it on receding. Here Ebn-Yokdhan (for that was the name the child had received when exposed by his mother) was suckled by a roe. As the boy grew up he followed his nurse, which showed all imaginable tenderness, and, being unusually intelligent, carried him to places where fruit-trees grew, and fed him with the ripest and the sweetest of their produce. At mid-day, when the sunbeams were fierce, she shaded

him ; at night, she cherished and kept him warm. In time she accustomed him to go with the herds of deer, among which he gained many ideas, and received various impressions, gradually acquiring the desire of some things, and an aversion for others. In noting the properties of different animals, he did not fail to remark that they were all provided with defensive weapons, as hoofs, horns, or claws, while he was naked and unarmed, whence he always came off with the worst whenever there happened any controversy about gathering the fruits which fell from the trees. He farther observed that his companions were clothed with hair, wool, or feathers, while he was exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather. When about seven years of age, he bethought himself of supplying the defects of which he had been thus rendered conscious, and in the first instance made himself a covering of the skin and feathers of a dead eagle. Soon after this, the demise of his nurse the roe opened a wide field of speculation. It imparted to him the notion of the dissolution of the body, and led him to inquire concerning the Being which he conjectured must have left it—what it was, and how it subsisted—what joined it to the body, and whither it had departed.

A fire having one day been accidentally kindled by collision of some reeds, our Solitary obtained the advantages of light and heat in absence of the sun ; and, while trying the power of the flame by throwing substances into it, among other things he cast a piece of fish, which had been tossed on shore, and thus acquired the first rudiments of the culinary art.

Besides the covering which he had procured from the spoils of wild beasts, he made threads of their hair ; he also learned the art of building by observations on swallows' nests, and he contrived to overtake other wild beasts by taming and mounting the fleetest of their number.

This first part of the life of Ebn-Yokdhan is entertaining enough, and bears a considerable resemblance to the adventures of Robinson Crusoe ; but, after all his external wants are supplied, and he finds leisure for mental speculation, the work becomes extremely mystical, and in some places unintel-



ligible. He, in the first place, examined the properties of all bodies in this sublunary world, as plants, minerals, &c. While contemplating the objects of nature, he conjectured that all these must have had some productive cause, and hence he acquired a general, but indefinite, idea of the Creator. From a desire to know him more distinctly, he directed his attention to the celestial bodies, of which the magnitude and movements increased his wonder and admiration. Having obtained a knowledge of the Supreme Being, he became desirous to ascertain by which of his own faculties he had comprehended this existence: He was thus led into a course of metaphysical speculation, and then of moral practice, which seems to have consisted in the adaptation of his conduct to certain far-fetched analogies with the heavenly orbs. At length that he excluded from his meditations, and he subtilized and refined to such a degree, even from his senses, all material objects; till, immersed in contemplation of the self-existent Being, and transported beyond the limits of this world, he enjoyed in his ecstasies that beatific vision to which Quietists, German Theosophes, and other enthusiasts, in modern times, have aspired.

In this work there are, of course, many errors in theology and philosophy, as the former is Mahometan, and the latter Aristotelian. The fundamental principles of the work are, that without the aids of instruction we may attain to a knowledge of all things necessary to salvation, and that in this world we may arrive, by contemplation, at an intuition of the Deity, a refined and abstract species of worship scarcely enjoyed in old times by the greatest favourites of heaven, and of which no promise has been vouchsafed either in the Mosaic or Christian dispensation.

Many ages elapsed before any direct imitation appeared, either of the True History of Lucian, or the mystical production of Ebn-Tophail. At length, during a period when the physical theory of the world was yet unsettled, and the Cartesian hypothesis was struggling with other systems for victory, different works of this kind appeared. They served the purpose of giving an agreeable display of the topics which were then the fashionable subjects of inquiry, while their

authors could throw in any new views, without risk, on the one hand, of injuring their reputation in case these views should prove erroneous, and without the danger of shocking public prejudices on the other. The *Histoire Comique des estats et empires de la Lune* of Cyrano Bergerac, and *Les estats et empires du Soleil* by the same author, appear to have had both these objects in view. I shall give some account of the first and best of these works, as it is, with much probability, supposed to have influenced Swift in his adoption of the same method of writing, and has acquired a high reputation among the compositions of this description.

Both the works of Cyrano were posthumous, and are in some parts mutilated. The first of them, *De la Lune*, was published by a Mons. de Bret, who tells us, in his preface, that the father of Cyrano, "estoit un bon vieux Gentilhomme assez indifferent pour l'education de ses enfants." He also informs us, that the young man entered into the army, and became the most famous duellist of his age, having fought more than a hundred times, without one of his rencontres having been in his own quarrel. He was wounded at the siege of Arras in 1640, and in consequence of wounds, early dissipation, fatigue, and chagrin, died in the thirty-fifth year of his age.

The notion of writing an account of an imaginary excursion to the moon, seems partly to have been suggested by the circumstance of the lunar world having become an object of curiosity among the philosophers of the day. In contradiction to the old opinion of the peripateticks, that the moon could not be a habitable world, on account of its unchangeable nature, Gilbert (Philosoph. magnet, c. 13 and 14), Henry Leroy and Francisco Patrizio explained at great length the appearances on which they founded an opposite system, while Hevelius, in his *Selenographia* and Gassendi, indulged in some serio-comic speculations with regard to lunar rivers and mountains.

Hence Cyrano conceived the intention of representing, in an humorous point of view, those chimeras which some of his contemporaries had too gravely treated. To this he joined the plan of ridiculing the pedantry, the scholastic disputations of the age, and



that deference to authority which was so long the bane of science. The notion of conveying this satire in the form of an imaginary excursion to the moon, was probably suggested by the Spanish work of Dominico Gonzales, of which a French translation was subsequently published, under title of *L'Homme dans la Lune, ou le Voyage Chimérique fait au Monde de la Lune, nouvellement decouvert par Dominique Gonzales Aventurier Espagnol, autrement dit le Courier Volant*. Bayle is mistaken in supposing that Bergerac was in any degree indebted to the *Voyage to Australasia*, published under the fictitious name of Jaques Sadeur. That production is no doubt a *Voyage Imaginaire*, but the two works have little resemblance, and Bergerac was dead more than twenty years before the voyage of Sadeur was written by the infamous Gabriel de Foigni.

Bergerac begins the relation of his voyage to the moon by an account of a conversation which led him to meditate on that luminary. His contemplations ended in planning some method to go thither; and, accordingly, having filled some phials with dew, he fixed them round his person, so that the heat of the sun, by attracting the dew, raised him from earth. He lighted in Canada, and gives us some astronomical conversations he there held with the governor. It would be needless to relate the method which he afterwards adopted to journey to the moon, in a species of elastic machine (of which the construction is not very clearly described), or to detail the circumstances which at length rendered his flight successful. The fiction contrived by Bergerac to account for his flight, is much less happy than that of Dominico Gonzales, who feigns that he had been drawn to the moon by ganzars—birds of passage which winter in that luminary.

After a long ascent, Cyrano finds himself between two moons, of which our earth was the largest, and at length he reaches the sphere of activity of the moon, towards which his feet then turn. This does not happen till he is considerably nearer the moon than the earth, and it is curious that he uses reasoning on the occasion not unlike what would be now employed by a Newtonian.—“Car, disois-Je en moy-mesme, cette Masse (la lune)

estant moindre que la nostre, il faut que la sphere de son activité ait aussi moins d'estendue, et que par consequent J'aye senty plus tard la force de son centre.”

At the entrance into the moon, a *hiatus* occurs in the work, of which there are several instances in the course of it, some of which, perhaps, were owing to the author himself, where a difficulty occurred not easily to be surmounted, and others probably to the editor, when a passage presented itself which was too free or indelicate. The beauties of the lunar country are painted with considerable felicity, though the description is not free from the affectation which was common among French authors in the days of Bergerac.—“Là le Printemps compose toutes les saisons—là les ruisseaux par un agreable murmure racontent leurs voyages aux cailloux : là mille petits gosiers emplumez font retentir la forest au bruit de leurs melodieuses chansons ; et la tremoussante assemblée de ces divins musiciens est si generale, qu' il semble que chaque feuille dans les bois ait pris la langue et la figure d'un Rossignol—on ne sçait si les fleurs agitées par un doux Zephire courent plutost apres elles-mesmes, qu' elles ne fuyent pour eschapper aux caresses de ce vent folatre.”

After walking half a league in a forest of jessamine and myrtle, Bergerac espies a beautiful and majestic youth reposing in the shade. With this personage, who had once been an inhabitant of our world, he enters into a conversation, of which we have only fragments. He is soon afterwards less fortunate, in meeting with the aborigines of the country, who are described as huge naked men, twelve cubits high, walking on all fours. By these he is considered as a little monster, and he is consigned to a mountebank, to be exhibited, like Gulliver, as a show—“Ce Basteleur me porta a son logis, ou il m'instruisit a faire le Godenot, à passer les culbutes, à figurer des grimaces : et les après dinées il faisoit prendre a la porte un certain prix de ceux qui me vouloient voir. Mais le ciel flechy de mes douleurs, et fasché de voir prophaner le Temple de son maitre, voulut qu' un jour comme J' estois attaché au bout d'une corde, avec laquelle le Charlatan me faisoit sauter pour divertir le monde, J'entendis la voix d'un homme qui me demanda en Grec qui J'



estois. Je fus bien estonné d'entendre parler en ce pais-là comme en notre monde. Il m'interrogea quelque temps ; Je luy repondis, et luy contay en suite generalement toute l'entreprise et le succes de mon voyage : il me consola, et Je me souviens qu'il me dit : Hé bien, mon fils, vous portez enfin la peine des foiblesses de vostre monde. Il y a du vulgaire icy comme là qui ne peut souffrir la pensée des choses ou il n'est point accoustumé. Mais scachez qu'on ne vous traite qu'a la pareille ; et que si quelqu'un de cette terre avoit monté dans la vostre, avec la hardiesse de se dire homme, vos sçavans le feroient estouffer comme un monstre. Il me promit en suite qu'il advertiroit la Cour de mon desastre."

This friendly personage alike disclaimed a terrestrial and lunar origin ; he informs Bergerac that originally he had been a native of the sun, which, being overstocked with inhabitants, occasionally sent out colonies to the neighbouring planets. He had, it seems, been commissioned to our earth, and in his youth had been known in Greece as the demon of Socrates. In Rome he had addicted himself to Brutus, but had at length preferred a lunar to a terrestrial residence, for which he assigns various reasons :—" C'est que les hommes y sont amateurs de la verité, qu'on n'y voit point de Pedans, que les Philosophes ne se laissent persuader qu'a la raison, et que l'autorité d'un sçavant, ny le plus grand nombre, ne l'emportent point sur l'opinion d'un bateleur en grange, quand il raisonne aussi fortement. Bref en ce pais on ne conte pour insenséz que les Sophistes et les Orateurs. Je luy demanday combien de temps ils vivoient ; il me repondit trois ou quatre mille ans."

With this solar being, Bergerac enters into philosophical conversation, and several very sublime discussions ensue, which are fortunately interrupted by his friend the exhibiter. " Il en estoit là de son discours, quand mon basteleur s'apperceut que la chambrée commençoit a s'ennuyer de mon jargon qu'ils n'entendoient point, et qu'ils prenoient pour un grongnement non articulé : il se remit de plus belle a tirer ma corde pour me faire sauter jusque a ce que les spectateurs etant saouls de rire et d'asseurer que J'avois presque autant d'esprit que les bestes de leur pais, ils se retirèrent chacun chez soy."

The chief inconvenience felt by Cyrano, during the first period of his lunar residence, was the want of provisions, for the inhabitants of the moon live by the odour of savoury viands ; a mode of subsistence also attributed to them in the True History of Lucian, which evinces our author's imitation of the works of the Grecian satirist. Cyrano, however, at last succeeds in making them understand, that something more substantial than the mere steam or exhalations of feasts was necessary for his subsistence.

At length Cyrano was conducted to court by the friendly demon, where, after much reasoning, it was concluded that he was the female of the queen's little animal, who, in consequence was ordered to be introduced to him. Accordingly, in the midst of a procession of monkeys in full dress, a little man arrived. " Il m'aborda," says Bergerac, " par un *Criado de vouestra merced* ; Je luy riposté sa reverence a peu pres en mesme termes." This gentleman was Dominico Gonzales, the Castilian, who had travelled thither with the Ganzars ; and this circumstance, by the way, is a proof that the work of Gonzales was the prototype of that of Cyrano, as his was evidently of Gulliver's voyage to Brobdignag. Dominico had immediately on his arrival been classed in the category of monkeys, as he happened to be clothed in the Spanish mode, which the inhabitants of the moon had fixed on for the fashionable attire of their monkeys, as the most ridiculous, which, after long meditation, they had found it possible to devise. Cyrano being considered by the lunar sages as the female of the same class of monkeys of which Dominico was the male, they were confined together, and have long and pretty tiresome discourses concerning elementary principles, the possibility of a vacuum, and other investigations, which were fashionable subjects of discussion among philosophical inquirers in the days of Bergerac. " Voila," says he, " les choses a peu pres dont nous amusons le temps : car ce petit Espagnol avoit l'esprit joly. Nostre entretien toute fois n'estoit que la nuit, a cause que depuis six heures du matin jusques au soir, la grande foule du monde qui nous venoit contempler a nostre logis nous eust destourné ; Car quelques-un nous jettoient des pierres, d'autres des noix, d'autres de l'herbe :



Il n'estoit bruit que des bestes du Roy, on nous servoit tous les jours a manger a nos heures, et le Roy et la reine prenoient eux-mesmes assez souvent la peine de me taster le ventre pour connoistre si Je n'emplissois point, car ils bruloient d'une envie extraordinaire d'avoir de la race de ces petits animaux. Je ne sçais si ce fut pour avoir esté plus attentif que mon masle a leurs simagrées et a leurs tons, mais J'appris plustost que luy a entendre leur langue, et a l'escorcher un peu."

The circumstance of Cyrano acquiring some knowledge of the language of the country, instead of being favourable to him, exposed him to inconvenience and persecution, as some free-thinkers began to allege that he was endowed with reason. This was most furiously opposed by the more orthodox and accredited sages, who maintained that it was not only foolish, but a most horrid impiety, to suppose that a creature which did not walk on all-fours, could be possessed of any species of mental intelligence. "Nous autres," argued they, "marchons a quatre pieds, parce que Dieu ne se voulut pas fier d'une chose si precieuse a une moïn ferme assiette, et il eut peur qu'allant autrement il n'arrivast malheur a l'homme, c'est pourquoy il prit la peine de l'asseoir sur quatre piliers, afin qu'il ne pût tomber : mais dedaignant de se mesler de la construction de ces deux brutes, il les abandonna au caprice de la Nature, laquelle ne craignant pas la perte de si peu de chose, ne les appuya que sur deux pattes."

But the principal argument against the rationality of Cyrano and his male, and on which the lunar sages particularly piqued themselves, was, that these animals possessed the *Os Sublime*, which the sages of our earth, in their discussions against quadrupeds, rightly consider as a pledge of immortality : "Voyez un peu outre cela," continued the lunar philosophers, "comment ils (Cyrano and the Spaniard) ont la teste tournée devers le Ciel : C'est la disette ou Dieu les a mis de toutes choses, qui l'a scitné de la sorte, car cette posture supliante temoigne qu'ils se plaignent au ciel de celuy qui les a creez, et qu'ils luy demandent permission de s'accommoder de nos restes. Mais nous autres nous avons la teste panchée en bas pour contempler les biens dont nous sommes seigneurs, et comme n'y ayant

rien au ciel a qui notre heureuse condition puisse porter envie."

The result of the philosophical conferences concerning Cyrano was, that he must be a bird—a discovery on which the sages greatly plumed themselves ; he was accordingly enclosed in a cage, and entrusted to the queen's fowler, who employed himself in teaching his charge as we do linnets. Under this person's auspices, the progress of Cyrano was such, that the disputes concerning his rationality were renewed, and the consequence was, that those sages who defended the orthodox side of the question, having considerably the worse of the argument, were obliged—"de faire publier un Arrest par lequel on defendoit de croire que J'eusse de la raison, avec un commandement tres-expres a toutes personnes de quelque qualité qu'elles fussent, de s'imaginer, quoy que Je pusse faire de spirituel, que c'estoit l'instinct qui me le faisoit faire."

To those who are acquainted with the history of philosophy, and the state of opinions in the days of Bergerac, there will appear considerable merit in the satire which has just been exhibited. The supporters of the systems of Aristotle had at one time (ridiculous as it may seem) procured an *Arret* at Paris, to prevent his doctrines being contested ; and some of his admirers, enraged at the shock which Descartes, Gassendi, and other philosophers in France at this time gave to his opinions, were desirous of resorting to a similar expedient.

In spite, however, of the Lunar *Arret*, the controversy grew so warm, that, as a last resource, Cyrano was ordered to appear before an assembly of the states, in order to judge of his rational powers. The examiners interrogated him on some points of philosophy, and refuted the opinions which he expressed in his answers, "de sorte que n'y pouvant repondre, J'alleguay pour dernier refuge les principes d'Aristote, qui ne me servirent pas davantage que les Sophismes, car en deux mots ils m'en decouvrirent la fausseté. Cet Aristote me dirent ils, dont vous vantez si fort la science, accommodoit sans doute les principes a sa Philosophie, au lieu d'accomoder sa Philosophie aux principes. Enfin comme ils virent que Je ne leur clabaudois autre chose,



sinon qu' ils n' estoient pas plus sçavans qu' Aristote, et qu' on m' avoit defendu de disputer contre ceux qui nioient les principes ; ils conclurent tous d' une commune voix, que Je n' estois pas un homme, mais possible quelque espece d' Austruche, si bien qu' on ordonna a l' Oyseleur de me reporter en cage. J' y passois mon temps avec assez de plaisir, car a cause de leur langue que Je possedois correctement, tout la cour se divertissoit a me faire jaser. Les Filles de la Reine entr' autres fouroient toudjours quelque bribe dans mon panier ; et la plus gentille de toutes ayant conceu quelque amitié pour moy, elle estoit si transportée de joye, lorsqu' étant en secret, Je l' entretenois des moeurs et des divertissemens des gens de nostre Monde, et principalement de nos cloches, et de nos autres instrumens de musique, qu' elle me protestoit les larmes aux yeux que si jamais Je me trouvois en estat de revoler en nostre Monde, elle me suivroit de bon coeur."

This lady continues to manifest much attachment to Cyrano, and her affection reminds us of the love of the fair Glumdalclitch for Gulliver in Brobdignag.

At length, his friend, the demon of Socrates, procures the deliverance of Cyrano, who now narrowly escapes being condemned to death for impiety, in maintaining that our earth was not merely a moon, but an inhabited world. This had been oppugned with so much zeal, and so many good arguments by the sages, that Cyrano, in revenge, asserted that he had come to opine that their earth was not an earth but a moon.—" Mais me dirent-ils tous, vous y voyez de la terre, des rivières, des mers, que seroit-ce donc tout cela ? N' importe, repartis Je, Aristote assure que ce n'est que la Lune ; et si vous aviez dit le contraire dans les classes ou J' ay fait mes études, on vous auroit sifflé. Il se fit sur cela un grand éclat de rire, il ne faut pas demander si ce fut de leur ignorance : Mais cependant on me conduisit dans ma cage." In fine, previous to his deliverance from this second confinement,

<sup>1</sup> This is probably intended as a satire on a passage in Charron's work *Sur La Sagesse*:—" Helas on choisit les tenebres, on se cache, on ne se livre qu' a la derobée au plaisir de produire son semblable ; au lieu qu' on le detruit en plein jour, en sonnant la trompette en remplissant l' air de fanfares ! Il n'est

Cyrano was obliged to make an *Amende*, and to proclaim publicly in the principal parts of the city,—" Peuple, Je vous declare que cette Lune-cy n'est pas une Lune, mais un Monde, et que ce Monde de la bas n'est pas un Monde, mais une Lune. Tel est ce que le Conseil trouve bon que vous croyez."

After the deliverance of Bergerac, we are presented with a number of philosophical disquisitions which he held with the demon and his friends. Among other topics, the arrival of a person of quality, decked out in a particular manner, gives rise to a discussion, which has been seized upon by Sterne:—" Cette coustume me semble bien extraordinaire, repartis-Je, car en nostre monde la marque de noblesse est de porter une Espée. Mais l' Hoste sans s'emouvoir : O mon petit homme, s' ecia-t' il, quoy les grands de vostre monde sont si enragez de fair parade d'un instrument qui designe un boureau, et qui n'est forgé que pour nous detruire, enfin l' ennemy juré de tout ce qui vit ; et de cacher au contraire ce sans qui nous serions au rang de ce qui n'est pas, le Prométhée de chaque animal, et le reparateur infatigable des foiblesses de la nature. Malheureuse contrée, où les marques de generation sont ignominieuses, et ou celles d'aneantissement son honorables."<sup>1</sup>

At length Cyrano, after performing a tour of the moon, is conducted from that luminary to earth, in the arms of the demon, who places him on the acclivity of a hill, and disappears. Some Italian peasants, whom he meets, cross themselves in great terror, but at length conduct him to a village. Here he is assailed by a prodigious barking of dogs, who, smelling the odour of the moon, against which they were accustomed to bark, keep up an incessant clamour. By walking a few days on a terrace in the sun, in order to purify himself of the smell, Cyrano forms a truce with his canine foes, visits Rome, and at length arrives at Marseilles.

Such is the abstract of the *Histoire Comique des Estats et Empire de la Lune*, a work which,

pas honnête de s'entretenir de certaines choses tandis qu' on parle avec orgueil d' un sabre et d' un pique ; et ce qui sert a tuer l' homme est une marque de noblesse—on dore on enrichit une epée, on s' en pare."



like all those of which the satire is in any degree temporary, has lost a good deal of its first relish. It is, however, still worthy of perusal, especially by those who are acquainted with the philosophical history of the period in which it was composed: And the interest which it excites must, to an English reader, be increased by its having served in many respects as a prototype to the most popular production of a writer so celebrated as Swift. Nor has it only directed the plan of the Dean of St Patrick's work; since even in the summary of the Lunar Voyage that has been presented, many points of resemblance will at once be discerned to the journey to Brobdignag. Gulliver is beset, at his first landing on that strange country, by a number of the inhabitants, who are of similar dimensions with the people of the moon, and who are astonished at his diminutive stature—he is exhibited as a sight at one of the principal towns—he amuses the spectators with various mountebank tricks—and acquires an imperfect knowledge of the language—afterwards he is carried to court, where he is introduced to the queen's favourite dwarf, and where great disputes arise concerning the species to which he belongs, among the chief scholars, whose speculations are ridiculed in a manner extremely similar to the reasonings of the lunar sages. The general turn of wit and humour is besides the same, and seems to be of a description almost peculiar to these two writers. The Frenchman, indeed, wanted the advantages of learning and education possessed by his successor, and hence his imagination was, perhaps, less guarded and correct; in many respects, however, it is more agreeably extravagant, and his aerial excursion is free from what is universally known to be the chief objections to the satire contained in the four voyages of Gulliver.

As Cyrano's Journey to the Moon is the origin of Swift's Brobdignag, so the *Histoire des Etats du Soleil* seems to have suggested the plan of the Voyage to Laputa. This second expedition of Cyrano is much inferior in merit to his former one, but, like the third excursion of Gulliver, is in a great measure intended to expose the vain pursuits of schemers and projectors in learning and science.

From an imitation, probably of the works

of Bergerac, many of the *Voyages Imaginaires*, which appeared in France during the first half of the 18th century, described excursions through the heavenly bodies. *Les Voyages de Milord Ceton*, by Marie Anne de Roumier, is the account of an English nobleman, who, during the disturbances of his own country in the time of Cromwell, is metamorphosed into a fly, and in that shape is carried by a friendly genius through the moon and seven planets. The author accommodates the character of the inhabitants of each star to the name it bears on earth. Venus is the centre of amatory indulgence, and Mercury the abode of avarice and fraud. By this means there is conveyed a general satire on different vices; and a ridicule of individuals addicted to the predominant passion in the planet seems also to have been occasionally intended.

There are also some imaginary expeditions through the interior of the earth, the most celebrated of which, next to the *Mundus Subterraneus* of Kircher, is the *Lamekis* of the Chevalier Mouhy, which comprehends an account of the sectaries of Serapis, who retired from the rest of the world to the centre of the globe, that, in this seclusion, they might celebrate their mysteries in uninterrupted tranquillity. The work is much in the style of an oriental tale; it is full of marvels, and displays much richness of imagination.

Connected with these wonderful expeditions, there is a species of allegorical travels into imaginary countries, feigned to be the particular residence of some peculiar passion or folly. Of this sort is the *Voyage de l'Isle d'Amour*, *Du Royaume de Coqueterie*, &c. The best work of the kind I have seen, is *Le Voyage de Prince Fan-feredin dans la Romancie*. It is the description of an ideal kingdom, filled with chimerical productions, and peopled with inhabitants of whimsical or factitious manners, and is on the whole an excellent criticism on the improbable scenes and unnatural manners with which so many writers of romance have stuffed their productions. Thus, some rocks which Fan-feredin passes on his journey, are represented as soft as velvet, having been melted the day before by the complaints of a lover. A great part of the satire is directed against the *Cleveland*, and *Memoires d'un Homme de Qualité*, by the



Abbé Prevot. It was written by the Jesuit Guillaume Bougeant, who died in 1743, and who was distinguished by various historical and satiric compositions.

To the above mentioned classes of Voyages Imaginaires, may be associated works resembling the Sentimental Journey, where the country is real, but the incidents of the journey imaginary. The earliest and most esteemed of these productions is the Voyage de Chapelle, where a journey is performed through different provinces of France. This work, which was written about the middle of the 17th century, served as the model of Fontaine's Voyage de Paris en Limousin, the Voyage de Languedoc, and a number of similar compositions, many of which, like their model, are partly written in prose, and partly in verse.

The class of *Songes et Visions* resembles the Voyages Imaginaires, and only differs from them in this, that the body is in repose while the mind ranges through the whole chimerical world. These productions are of a more fugitive nature, as their duration is limited, than the Voyages Imaginaires, but they are also less unnatural, since nothing is too extravagant to be presented to the imagination, when the eye of reason is closed with that of the body. Of this species of writing, some beautiful examples have been transmitted by antiquity. In modern times, the earliest is the Laberinto d'Amore of the celebrated Boccaccio, which was the model of similar French compositions.

This production was followed by the Polifilo or Hypernotomachia, written in Italian in 1467 by Francesco Colonna, who, being a priest, is said to have thus allegorically described his passion for a nun called Lucretia Maura. In this vision Polifilo is a lover, who imagines himself conducted in a dream by his mistress Polia through the temples, tombs, and antiquities of Greece and Egypt. They are at length carried in a bark by Cupid to the Island of Cythera, which is beautifully described, and there behold the festivals of Venus and commemoration of Adonis: the Nymphs prevail on Polia to relate her story, and when it is concluded Polifilo is awakened by the song of the nightingale. This work is full of mysteries, of which Polia is the

interpreter, but the mysteries are not always the clearer for her interpretation.

The Hypernotomachia was translated into French at an early period, under the title of Songe de Poliphile, and was probably the model of similar compositions, which became very prevalent in France during the period on which we are now engaged.

In Les Songes d'un Hermite, the different states of society and occupations of individuals pass in review before a recluse, and he finds nothing in them all to induce him to quit his solitude.

In Les Songes et Visions Philosophiques de Mercier, the author feigns, that while returning from the country to Paris, he arrived at a small inn. Here he met an interesting woman, who had made an unfortunate love marriage. While relating her story, she is surprised and delighted by the arrival of her husband, whom she had regarded as lost. The story the author had heard, and the scene he had witnessed, lead him to ruminate on the sorrows and pleasures of love, which form the subject of his first dream, as the impressions that had been made continued after he dropped asleep. Nature holds up to him a mirror, in which he sees represented the effects and influence of that passion in different states of society, the impulse it gives to the savage, and the tameness of domestic happiness in civilized society, to which the author seems to prefer the gratifications of the Indian. His second vision relates to war, and is raised by a perusal of the celebrated treatise of Grotius. The dreamer is carried to a valley, where Justice comes to decide on the fate of conquerors and heroes. Here the shades of Alexander, Tamerlane, and other warriors, pass before him, and are judged according to their deserts.

The Romans Cabalistiques form the last species of this division of fiction, which it will be necessary to mention. For many ages the mysteries of the Cabalistic philosophy were subjects of belief and investigation in France. The ends at which its votaries aimed, were the transmutation of metals, and the composition of the Elixir of life, supposed to be the quintessence of the four elements, which, according to this fantastic creed, were inhabited or governed by Sylphs, Undinas, Gnomes,



and Salamanders. The vain researches of the cabalists, however, produced some discoveries in experimental physics, and the more ornamental part of their system has suggested the machinery of the most elegant poem in our language.

About the middle of the 17th century, when the partizans of this philosophy were hardly yet laughed out of countenance, the Abbé Villars undertook to expose its absurdities in a satire entitled *Le Comte de Gabalis, ou Entretiens sur les sciences secretes*, a work which was very popular in France, and perhaps instrumental in discrediting the reveries which it ridiculed. Its author feigns that he was acquainted with a number of philosophers who prosecuted the study of the occult sciences, and was employed to correspond in their name with the Count Gabalis, a celebrated German adept, who was expected in a short time to visit Paris. The count is much prepossessed in his favour by the letters he received, and, on coming to Paris, immediately waits on his correspondent, whom he finds endued with such excellent dispositions for the reception of his doctrines, that he resolves to develop to him the whole Arcana of the Rosicrucian science. Previous, however, to this initiation, he enjoins, as requisite to the successful prosecution of his studies, a renunciation, which, if really as essential as the adept describes, satisfactorily accounts for the little progress that has been made in the cabalistic arts. As a compensation, the disciple is promised the most familiar acquaintance with the elementary spirits, and he of course feels deeply interested concerning their attributes. This introduces the ensuing conversations, which relate to sylphs, undinas, &c., and the nature of their intercourse with the children of men. The whole system of Sylphs and Gnomes had been originally unfolded by Paracelsus. But the Abbé Villars has chiefly followed *La Chiave del Gabinetto*, a work attributed to the Signor Giuseppe Francisco Borri, a Milanese impostor, who, being forced to leave his own country on account of his dissolute life and heretical opinions, travelled through Europe, imposing on the credulous by a pretended knowledge of cabalistic secrets. During his life a series of letters were printed, under title of *Chiave del Gabinetto*, which were pre-

tended to have been written by Borri, but which, in fact, only contain a record of his supposed secrets and opinions. The two first letters give an account of a conversation held between Borri and a Danish cabalist with regard to elementary beings. The others disclose the secrets concerning transmutation of metals, the perpetual mobile, &c.

The Comte Gabalis was followed by a number of tales relating to elementary beings. In *Les Ondins*, a princess escapes from the power of a magician, by whom she is persecuted. She arrives at the sea-shore, and in a fit of despair at her forlorn situation, plunges into the deep, where she is hospitably received by the undinas, whose palace and empire are magnificently described.

*L'Amant Salamandre* is the story of an interested governess, who, in order to procure an establishment for a son, resolves to bring her pupil, a young lady of beauty and fortune, into a situation which will compel her to form this unequal alliance. With this view she leads her to despise the human species, and to sigh for beings of a superior order, as alone worthy of her virtues and accomplishments. Her thoughts are thus turned towards an intercourse with elementary spirits, and her ruin is finally completed by the introduction of the young man, invested with the imposing attributes of a salamander.

*Les Lutins de Chateau de Kernosy* is the work of Madame Murat, so well known by her fairy tales. The enchantments here, also, are fictitious, and performed by pretended magicians in order to accomplish their purpose. Two lovers, with the view of facilitating their introduction into a castle inhabited by their mistresses, contrive to pass for elementary spirits, deceive the vigilance of a severe and antiquated duenna, and get rid of their rivals, who are two awkward and credulous rustics.

Herodotus, the father of history, tells us of men who, at particular seasons, changed themselves into wolves, and we are informed in the 8th eclogue of Virgil that Mœris was often detected in this disguise. Solinus also mentions a people of Istria who possessed the same enviable privilege. The notion, doubtless, had its foundation in the imposition of pretended sorcerers, who laid claim to a power



of effecting this transformation, and perhaps, to aid the deception, disguised themselves in wolves' skins. The belief, however, in this faculty, left a name behind it in every country of Europe. He who enjoyed it was called Garwalf by the Normans, and Bisclaveret by the Bretons, which is the name of one of the Armorican lays of Marie. It contains the story of a baron, whose wife perceiving that her husband was invariably absent during three days of the week, interrogated him so closely on the cause of his periodical disappearance, that she at length reduced him to the mortifying acknowledgement that during one half of the week he prowled as a bisclaveret; and she also extracted from him a secret, which enabled her to confirm his metamorphosis. From a passage in the *Origines Gauloises*, by La Tour d'Auvergne, it would appear that a belief in this species of transformation continued long in Britany. —“ Dans l'opinion des Bretons, ces memes hommes se revetent, pendant la nuit, de peaux de Loups, et en prennent quelquefois la forme, pour se trouver a des assemblees ou le demon est suppose presider. Ce que l'on dit ici des deguisements et des courses nocturnes de ces pretendus hommes loups, dont l'espece n'est pas encore entierement eteinte

dans l'ancienne Armorique, nous rappelle ce que l'histoire rapporte des Lycantrophes d'Irlande.” In Ireland, indeed, this superstition probably subsisted longer than in any other country. “ In some parts of France,” says Sir William Temple in his *Miscellanea*, “ the common people once believed certainly there were Lougaroos, or men turned into wolves; and I remember several Irish of the same mind.”

Under this name of *Loups-Garoux*, those persons who enjoyed this agreeable faculty have been introduced into several French tales, and other works of fiction, during the period on which we are now employed. These productions have been very happily ridiculed in *L'Histoire des Imaginations* de M. Oufle, by the Abbé Bardelon. This work is partly written on the model of *Don Quixote*, and contains the story of a credulous and indolent man, who, having read nothing but marvellous tales, believes, at length, in the existence of sorcerers, demons, and *loup-garoux*. He first imagines that he is persecuted by a spirit, then alternately fancies himself a magician and *loup-garou*, and devotes his time to the discovery of a mode of penetrating into the thoughts of men, and attracting the affections of women.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### Sketch of the Origin and Progress of the English Novel—Serious—Comic—Romantic—Conclusion.

It will have been remarked, that the account of the modern French tales and novels has been much less minute than the analysis of those fictitious histories by which they were preceded. To this compression of the subject, I have been led partly by the variety, and partly by the notoriety of the more recent productions. In the early periods of literature, works of fiction were rare, and thus it was comparatively easy to enumerate and describe them. But during last century, the number of fictitious writings, both in France and England, was so great, that as full an account of them as of those which appeared

in former times, would occupy many volumes. Such analysis is likewise the less necessary or proper, since, when works of fiction become so very numerous and varied, they cease to be characteristic of the age in which they were produced. In former periods, when readers were few, and when only one species of fiction appeared at a time, it was easy to judge what were the circumstances which gave birth to it, and to which it gave birth in turn. But in later times, not only an infinite number of works, but works of different kinds, have sprung up at once; and thus were no longer expressive of the taste and feelings



of the period of their composition. Above all, what renders a minute analysis unnecessary is, that the works themselves are known to most readers, and, consequently, a detailed account of them would be altogether superfluous. Abstracts may be presented on occasions where the original is little known, and abounds in long details, but they are perfectly unsuitable and improper when the whole novel is concisely and elegantly composed. In this case the value of the original consists less in the story itself than in the style and sentiments and colouring—in short, in a variety of circumstances, which in an analysis or abridgement totally evaporate and disappear.

Such views have prevented me from entering into detail concerning the French, and they apply still more forcibly to the English novel. What could be more insufferable than an analysis of *Tom Jones*, and how feeble would be the idea which it would convey of the original? Accordingly I shall confine myself to a very short and general survey of the works of English fiction.

We have already seen that, during the reigns of our Henrys and Edwards, the English nation was chiefly entertained with the fables of chivalry. The French romances concerning Arthur and his knights continued to be the most popular productions during the rule of the Plantagenet monarchs. In the time of Edward IV. the fictions of chivalry were represented in an English garb in the *Morte Arthure*, which is a compilation from the most celebrated French romances of the Round Table; while, at the same period, the romantic inventions concerning the history of Troy and classical heroes were translated and printed by the indefatigable Caxton. *Artus de la Bretagne* and *Huon of Bourdeaux* were done into English by Lord Berners in the reign of Henry VIII., and continued, along with the *Morte Arthure*, to be the chief delight of our ancestors during the sway of the family of Tudor. In the age of Queen Elizabeth, the Spanish romances concerning *Amadis* and *Palmerin* were translated, and a few imitations of the romances of chivalry were also written in English. Of this class of fiction, the “Famous, delectable, and pleasaunt Hystorie of the renowned Parismus, Prince of

Bohemia,” may be regarded as a representative. This work, written by Emanuel Ford, and printed 1598, was so popular in its day, that the 13th edition, in black letter, is now before me. It is principally formed on the model of the Spanish romances, particularly on *Palmerin d’Oliva*.

The *Ornatus and Artesia*, also by Emanuel Ford, and the *Pheander*, or *Maiden Knight*, written by Henry Roberts, and printed in 1595, belong to the same class of composition. By this time, however, the genuine spirit of chivalry had evaporated, and these productions present but a feeble image of the doughty combats and daring adventures of *Lancelot* or *Tristan*. A new state of society and manners had sprung up, and hence the nation eagerly received those innumerable translations and imitations of the Italian tales, which, being now widely diffused by means of *Paynter’s Palace of Pleasure*, *Whetstone’s Heptameron*, and *Grimstone’s Admirable Histories*, supplied to the higher class of English readers that species of entertainment which their ancestors had formerly derived from the *Recuyell* of the *Hystories* of *Troye* and the *Legends* of *Arthur*. The exploits of chivalry—the atrocities and intrigues of the Italian tales, are now alike neglected; and while such works as those of *Richardson* and *Fielding* interpose between, they can scarcely be regarded by the present age or posterity. Yet it should not be forgotten that the images and characters of chivalry bestowed additional richness and variety on the luxuriant fancy of *Spenser*, while the incidents of the Italian tales supplied materials even for the inexhaustible imagination of *Shakspeare*, and gave birth to that peculiar turn of tragic as well as comic interest adopted by the most numerous and noble race of our dramatic poets.

While the English nation, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, were chiefly amused with the fading remains of romances of chivalry, and the earliest imitations of Italian tales, there was invented, during the same period, a new species of novel, written in a style of bad taste and affectation, to which there had hitherto been no parallel, and of which it is to be hoped there will never be an imitation. The first work of this description was the *Euphues* of *John Lyly*, who was born in 1553



in the Wolds of Kent. At an early age he went to court, where he was patronized by Queen Elizabeth, and hoped to be preferred to the situation of Master of the Revels; but after an attendance of many years, he was finally disappointed. While at the English court he wrote his romance of Euphues, which some persons have erroneously imagined to be intended as a satire on the phraseology of the court ladies during the reign of Elizabeth. Euphues, however, seems perfectly a serious production, and its author had either the bad taste to adopt in composition the absurd style of conversation which was then in vogue, or, what is more probable, the popularity of his work introduced an affected jargon among the *Precieuses Ridicules* of the age, in the same manner as the romances of Mad. Scuderi brought the long and inflated compliments of her characters into fashion:—

Deux nobles campagnards, grands lecteurs des  
Romans,

M'ont dit tout Cyrus dans leurs longs compliments.

Boileau.

The work of Lylie, which was published about 1580, is divided into two parts, of which the first is entitled Euphues, and the second Euphues and his England. In the beginning of this production we are told that Euphues, an Athenian gentleman, distinguished for the elegance of his person and beauty of his wit, his amorous temperament and roving disposition, arrived at the court of Naples, "which was rather the Tabernacle of Venus than the Temple of Vesta, and more meet for an atheist than one of Athens." Here Euphues forms a friendship with Philautus, a Neapolitan gentleman, who carries him to sup at the house of his mistress Lucilla, or the gentlewoman, as she is called through the romance, where he is so coldly received that he inquires if it be the guise of Italy to welcome strangers with strangeness. In spite of this unfavourable reception, Euphues becomes deeply enamoured of Lucilla, and after supper requests leave to give a discourse on the topic, whether love is most excited by the perfections of mind or beauties of form. Lucilla is so captivated with the eloquence of Euphues in treating this delicate subject, that "for his sake she forsakes Philautus." After this there is little incident in the romance, but many intricate

discourses between Euphues and his new mistress, particularly on constancy in love, the existence of which Euphues attempts to demonstrate, by reminding her "that though the rust fret the hardest steel, yet doth it not eat the emerald; though the Polypus change his hue, yet the salamander keepeth his colour." To all this Lucilla replies by treating him in the same manner as she had formerly used Philautus. These unfortunate lovers are now reconciled, and Euphues writes his "Cooling Card to Philautus, and all fond Lovers." He then returns to Athens, whence he transmits several letters to his Neapolitan friend, and also a system of education which he drew up, and entitled Euphues and his Ephœbus.

In the commencement of the second part, Euphues, having joined Philautus, sets out on a voyage to England. The episodical story of the hermit, which he hears on his passage, is excellent, and the advice of the recluse to his family reminds us of that perfect specimen of worldly wisdom exhibited in the Instructions of Lord Burleigh to his Son. After the arrival of Euphues in England, we are presented with some curious details concerning the manners and government of that country in the age of Queen Elizabeth. On reaching London, Philautus having fallen in love with a lady called Camilla, consults a magician how he may win her affections; and he, of course, cannot do this without relating all the examples of vehement passion recorded in ancient history and mythology. The magician is as learned on the subject of philtres, but concludes, "that though many there have been so wicked as to seek such means, yet was there never any so unhappy as to find them." Philautus being thus disappointed, sends Camilla an amatory letter enclosed in a mulberry, which having failed to gain her love, he transmits a second, in which he threatens suicide, and subscribes himself—"Thine ever, though shortly never."

At this crisis Euphues is recalled by letters to Athens, whence he transmits to Italy, for use of the Neapolitan ladies, what he calls "Euphues' Glass for Europe," a flattering description of England, which he considers as the mirror in which other countries should dress themselves. This, of course, contains



an encomiastic representation of the court—the beauty, talents, and, above all, the chastity of Queen Elizabeth, and the virtues of English women, “who do not, like the Italian ladies, drink wine before they rise, to increase their colour.” Philautus now reports by letter that he had married the lady Flavia, who, it will be recollected, was his third mistress.” “Euphues then gave himself to solitariness, determining to sojourn in some uncouth place; and this order he left with his friends, that if any news came or letters, that they should direct them to the Mount of Selexsedra, where I leave him, either to his musing or muses.”

In the romance of Euphues there are chiefly three faults, which indeed pervade all the novels of the same school. 1. A constant antithesis, not merely in the ideas, but words, as one more given to *theft* than to *thrift*. 2. An absurd affectation of learning, by constant reference to history and mythology. 3. A ridiculous superabundance of similitudes: Lylie is well characterised by Drayton, as always

Talking of stones, stars, planets, fishes, flies,  
Playing with words and idle similies.

Thus, in the very commencement of the work, the author, moralizing on the elegance and accomplishments of his hero, remarks, “that freshest colours soonest fade—the keenest razor soonest turns his edge—the finest cloth is soonest eaten with moths, and the cambrick sooner stained than the coarse canvass.” The same style is preserved in the most impassioned letters and conversations in the work. Philautus, writing to Euphues, who had just deprived him of the affections of his mistress, compares his rival, in the course of a single page, to musk, the cedar tree, a swallow, bee, and spider; while perfect friendship is likened to the glow-worm, frankincense, and the damask rose. As a specimen of the amorous dialect of the romance, Lucilla, after reminding her admirers that there are more dangers in love than hares in Athos, runs over all the examples of antiquity in which ladies had been deceived by strangers, as Dido, Ariadne, &c. “It is common and lamentable,” she continues, “to behold simplicity entrapped in subtilty, and those that have most might to be infected with most malice. The spider

weaveth the fine web to hang the fly—the wolfe weareth a faire face to devour the lamb—the merlin striketh at the partridge—the eagle snappeth at the fly \* \* \*. I have read that the bull being tied to the fig-tree loseth his strength—that the whole herd of deer stand at the gaze if they smell a sweet apple—that the dolphin by the sound of musick is brought to shore. And then no marvell it is if the wilde deere be caught with an apple, that the tame damosell is wonne with a blossom—if the fleet dolphin be allured with harmony, that women be entangled with the melody of men’s speech.”

Notwithstanding its bad taste and affectation, or perhaps in consequence of them, Euphues was in the highest vogue at the period of its composition, particularly among the court ladies, who had all the phrases by heart. Blount, the editor of six of Lylie’s comedies, informs us that all the ladies of that time were his scholars; she who spoke not Euphuism being as little regarded at court as if she could not speak French. Ben Jonson often makes his ladies quote Euphues. Thus Fallace, in *Every Man out of his Humour* (act v. scene x.), “O, Master Brisk, as ’tis said in Euphues, Hard is the choice, when one is compelled either by silence to die with grief, or by speaking to live with shame.”

Unfortunately, Lylie had not merely admirers, but, as was naturally to be expected from his popularity, many imitators. Of these, one of the earliest was Lodge, author of *Rosalind, or Euphues’ Golden Legacy*, a production printed in 1590, and chiefly curious as being the origin of one of Shakspeare’s most celebrated dramas. Part of Lodge’s novel was probably taken from the *Coke’s Tale of Gamelyn*, which was written by a contemporary of Chaucer, and has by some been erroneously attributed to that father of English poetry. Gamelyn, the younger son of Sir Johan de Boundis, was deprived of his inheritance and scurvily treated by his elder brother, who, among other things, persuaded him to wrestle with a doughty champion, hoping that he would be destroyed in the combat. In all his misfortunes Gamelyn received much commiseration from *Adam*, the old steward of his deceased father, by whose assistance he at length escaped from the cruelty of his



brother, and arrived, with his preserver, at a forest, where he sees a band of outlaws seated at a repast, and is conducted by them to their king. Lodge's *Rosalynd*, in its turn, has suggested almost the whole plot of *As You Like It*, in which Shakspeare has not merely borrowed the story, but sketched several of the principal characters, and copied several speeches and expressions from the novel. The phrase "Weeping tears," used by the clown (act ii. scene iv.), and the whole description given by Oliver (act iv. scene iii.) of Orlando discovering him in the forest while in danger from the lion and serpent, is copied from Lodge's *Rosalynd*. A song in the second scene of the fourth act, beginning

What shall he have that killed the deer?—  
His leather skin and horns to wear, &c.

is from a passage in Lodge:—"What newes, forester? hast thou wounded some deere and lost him in the fall? Care not, man, for so small a loss—thy fee was but the skinne and the hornes." Lodge's work also contains verses which indicate some poetical taste and feeling, and which have not been neglected by Shakspeare in the poetry and songs with which he has interspersed his delightful drama. The characters, however, of the Clown and Audrey are of his own invention, as also that of Jaques, who fills the background of the scene with a gloomy sensibility, like the *Pallida Mors* in the festive odes of Horace. The catastrophe of the piece is also considerably altered. Shakspeare, as is remarked by his commentators, appears to have been in great haste to conclude *As You Like It*. In Lodge, the elder brother is instrumental in saving Aliena from a band of ruffians "who thought to steal her away, and to give her to the king for a present, hoping by such gifte to purchase all their pardons." Without the intervention of this circumstance, the passion of Celia (under name of Aliena) appears to be very hasty. It was conceived for a person of unamiable disposition, of whose reformation she had just heard, and whom she had only known at her father's court as remarkable for a churlish disposition, and his illiberal treatment of a younger brother. Finally, in Lodge's novel the usurping Duke is not diverted from his purpose by the pious

counsels of a hermit, but is subdued and killed by the twelve peers of France, who were brought by the third brother of Rosader to assist him in the recovery of his right. This incident, of course, could not have been well introduced into a drama; but even in that which Shakspeare has adopted in its place, he has suppressed, while hurrying to a conclusion, the dialogue between the usurper and hermit, "and thus lost," as Dr Johnson has remarked, "an opportunity of exhibiting a moral lesson, in which he might have found matter worthy of his highest powers. He has also forgot old Adam, the servant of Sir Rowland de Boyes, whose fidelity should have entitled him to some notice and reward, and whom Lodge, at the conclusion of his novel, makes captain of the king's guard."

Shakspeare has likewise been indebted for the plot of his *Winter's Tale* to another novel of the same school—*The Pleasant History of Dorastus and Fawnia*, by R. Greene, an author equally remarkable for his genius and profligacy. It was at one time supposed that the novel was founded on the play, but Dr Farmer discovered a copy of *Dorastus and Fawnia* printed in 1588, which was previous to the composition of the *Winter's Tale*. Our great dramatist, however, has changed all the names. His Leontes, King of Sicily, is called Egistes in the novel; Polyxenes, King of Bohemia, is there named Pandosto; Mamillius, Prince of Sicily, Garinter; and Hermione, Bellaria; Florizel is Greene's Dorastus, and Perdita his Fawnia. Shakspeare has also added the characters of Antigonus, Paulina, and Autolycus. In the principal part of the plot he has servilely followed the novel. The oracle, in the second scene of the third act, is copied from it, and in various passages he has merely versified its language. Thus the lines,

The gods themselves,  
Humbling their deities to love, have taken  
The shapes of beasts upon them: Jupiter  
Became a bull, and bellowed; the green Neptune,  
A ram, and bleated; and the fire-robed god,  
Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,  
As I am now,—

are from the following passage in *Dorastus and Fawnia*:—"And yet, Dorastus, shame not the shepherd's weed—The heavenly gods have sometimes earthly thoughts; Neptune became



a ram, Jupiter a bull, Apollo a shepherd: *They* gods, and yet in love—*Thou* a man, appointed to love." By his adherence to the novel, the poet has also been led into the grossest geographical blunders, as making Bohemia a maritime country, sending ambassadors to the Isle of Delphos, &c. He has likewise been betrayed into such improbabilities and breach of the dramatic rules, as could only be atoned for by his skilful delineation of character, and that wild simplicity which pervades the sentiments and language.

Greene is also author of a romance called *Arcadia*, published in 1587, and formed on the model of Sidney's celebrated pastoral, which, though it was not printed till some years after the publication of Greene's *Arcadia*, had been written a considerable time before it.

The most beautiful, however, and best known of Greene's productions, is his *Philomela*, otherwise called *Lady Fitzwater's Nightingale*, in honour of the Lady Fitzwater, to whom it is addressed; "being penned," as the author says in the dedication, "to approve women's chastity." This beautiful tale has been lately reprinted in the first number of the *Archaica*, and is sufficient, as the editor remarks, to rescue the author's memory from the shame of a constant prostitution of his talents to immoral purposes. The character of *Philomela* is so exquisitely drawn, with so many attractions of saint-like purity, that the fancy which portrayed it, must have been at times illumined by the most tender and sublime conceptions. The style is indeed deformed by the affectations of Euphuism, but, in the conduct of the story, there is a selection of circumstances which anticipates the skill of a later period, and which is the more remarkable, when contrasted with the prolixity of Sidney's *Arcadia*, a work enjoying in that age the highest reputation.

*Philomela*, the heroine of this tale, was the wife of a Venetian nobleman, Count Philipppo Medici, and formed the wonder of that city, "not for her beauty, though Italy afforded none so fair—not for her dowry, though she were the only daughter of the Duke of Milan, but for the admirable honours of her mind, which were so many and matchless, that Virtue seemed to have planted there the paradise of her perfection." Though the veil which this

lady "used for her face was the covert of her own house—though she never would go abroad but in company of her husband, and then with such bashfulness, that she seemed to hold herself faulty in stepping beyond the shadow of her own mansion; nevertheless, the unreasonable count "tormented her more with jealousy than recompensed her with affection, feeding upon that passion that gnaweth like envy upon her own flesh." In this frame of mind he bethought himself who of his guests had "most courteous entertainment at her hand." It is true, he was unable to call to his recollection any impropriety of conduct, or even levity of behaviour; but then he remembered "that every outward appearance is not an authentical instance, that the greener the *Alisander* leaves be, the more bitter is the sap, and the salamander is the most warm when he lieth furthest from the fire;" from all which he drew the inference, "that women are most heart-hollow when they are most lip-holy."

This unfortunate recollection concerning the colour of *Alisander* leaves, and the very peculiar properties of the salamander, together with other similitudes equally conclusive, drawn from stars, and eagles, and astronomer's almanacks, induced the count to employ an intimate friend, called Giovanni Lutesio, the most fine and courtly gentleman of Venice, to "make experience of his wife's honesty;" Lutesio promising the husband, that, if he found her pliant to listen to his passion, he would make it manifest to him without dissembling.

Lutesio accordingly began to lay his baits, and one day, when he found *Philomela* sitting alone in her garden, singing to her lute many merry ditties, he embraced an opportunity of informing her that he was in love, but without revealing who was the object of his passion. On this occasion *Philomela* propounded so many moral maxims, illustrated by apposite examples drawn from mythology and Roman history, and said so many fine things about ravens and musked *Angelica*, that he did not venture to proceed farther, but went to inform his friend of the modesty of his wife, and to rehearse the "cooling card of good counsel," which he had received from her prudence.



The husband, however, was not satisfied; he attributed the legend of good lessons she had uttered, to his friend having refrained from professing a passion for herself, and therefore persuaded him to declare a love which he did not feel. Lutesio accordingly sent her a letter to that purpose, accompanied by a bad sonnet. Philomela returned an indignant answer, but also replied to the sonnet, to "show that her wit was equal to her virtue."

All this was reported to the husband, who now began to entertain suspicions of Lutesio, and to fear, that "Men cannot dally with fire, nor sport with affection, and that he who had been a suitor in jest might be a speeder in earnest." At length his suspicions were so confirmed by trifles light as air, that he entertained no doubt of the infidelity of his wife, but as he had no proof, he suborned two of his slaves to testify her guilt. The courts of justice accordingly pronounced a sentence of divorce, and banished both Lutesio and Philomela from the Venetian territory.

Philomela sailed for Palermo. During the voyage the shipmaster became enamoured of her beauty, "but his passion was so quailed by the rareness of her qualities, that he rather endeavoured to reverence her as a saint, than to love her as a paramour." On her arrival at Palermo, she resided with him and his wife, and found in their humble dwelling that "quiet rested in low thoughts, and the safest content in the poorest cottages; that the highest trees abide the sharpest storms, and the greatest personages the sorest frowns of fortune: therefore with patience she brooked her homely course of life, and had more quiet sleeps than in her palace in Venice; only her discontent was when she thought on Philipppo, that he had proved so unkind, and on Lutesio, that for her sake he was so deeply injured: Yet, as well as she might, she salved these sores, and covered her hard fortunes with the shadow of her innocence."

Meanwhile Lutesio had fled to the Duke of Milan, the father of Philomela, and informed him of the injuries inflicted on his daughter. The duke immediately proceeded to Venice, and sought reparation from the senate. Those slaves who had been suborned by the count, confessed their perjury. Then the count,

conscience-stricken, rose up and declared, "that there is nothing so secret but the date of days will reveal; that as oil, though it be moist, quencheth not fire, so time, though ever so long, is no sure covert for sin; but as a spark raked up in cinders will at last begin to glow and manifest a flame, so treachery hidden in silence will burst forth and cry for revenge."

"Whatsoever villainy," continued he, "the heart doth work, in process of time the worm of conscience will bewray. It booteth little by circumstance to discover the sorrow I conceive, or little need I show my wife's innocence, when these slaves whom I suborned to perjure themselves, have proclaimed her chastity and my dishonour: suffice it then that I repent, though too late, and would make amends; but I have sinned beyond satisfaction, for there is no sufficient recompense for unjust slander. Therefore, in penalty of my perjury towards Philomela, I crave myself justice against myself, that you would enjoin a penance, but no less than the extremity of death."

The life of Philipppo, however, was spared by the clemency of the duke, and all set out in different directions in quest of the injured Philomela. The husband arrived at Palermo, and in despair accused himself of a murder which had been committed in an obscure corner of the city. Philomela hearing that a Venetian was thrown into prison, asked to see him, and perceived through the lattice that he was indeed her husband; and, about the same time, she learned that her innocence had been established at Venice. Her first emotions were those of indignation and hopes of revenge, but soon she reminded herself "that the word husband is a high term, easily pronounced in the mouth, but never to be banished from the heart—knowest thou not that the love of a wife must not end but by death? that the term of marriage is dated in the grave?" She then framed to herself an excuse for the conduct of her husband, "that he did not work this wrong because he loved another, but because he overloved thee: 'Twas jealousy that forced him to that folly, and suspicion is incident only to such as are kind-hearted lovers."

Under the influence of these sentiments she



appeared in court, when her husband was arraigned, and accused herself of the murder. In the course of the trial, the innocence of both was made manifest. The judge inquired why these two did plead themselves guilty; Philippo answered for despair, as weary of his life—Philomela said for the safety of her husband.

“The Sicilians at this shouted at her wondrous virtues, and Philippo, in a swoon between grief and joy, was carried away half dead to his lodging, where he had not lain two hours, but, in an ecstasy, he ended his life. And Philomela hearing of the death of her husband, fell into extreme passions. She returned home to Venice, and there lived the desolate widow of Philippo Medici all her life; which constant chastity made her so famous, that in her life she was honoured as the paragon of virtue, and after her death solemnly, and with wonderful honour, entombed in St Mark’s Church, and her fame holden canonized until this day in Venice.”

The concluding incident of the story of Philomela is evidently an awkward alteration of Boccaccio’s celebrated story of Titus and Gesippus (see p. 241). The first part, which relates to the trial of the wife by the husband’s friend, corresponds, as has doubtless been remarked, with the episode of the *Curioso Impertinente*, in Don Quixote, where Anselmo persuades his friend to try the chastity of his wife Camilla. It is not probable, however, that Greene and Cervantes copied from each other; Greene was dead before Don Quixote was published, and it is not likely that Cervantes had any opportunity of perusing Philomela. They must therefore have borrowed from some common original. Indeed, I remember to have once read the story in some old Italian novelist, but cannot now recall it more precisely to my recollection. Philomela is the origin of Davenport’s play of the City Night-cap, where Lorenzo makes his friend Philippo try the chastity of his wife, Abstemia, sister to the Duke of Venice. This drama was written early in the 17th century, and has been published in Dodsley’s collection; but the editor is mistaken in supposing that it is borrowed from the *Curioso Impertinente*, as the plot coincides much more closely with Philomela. Lorenzo bribes

two slaves to swear to his wife’s infidelity. The Duke of Venice comes to seek reparation for the wrongs of Abstemia, who had meanwhile retired to Milan, where all that takes place corresponds precisely with what occurs at Palermo in Philomela. The style, too, is full of Euphuism, and even the words of Greene are sometimes adopted:—

O when the Elisander leaf looks green,  
The sap is then most bitter. An approved appearance  
Is no authentic instance: She that is lip-holy  
Is many times heart-hollow. —

Lodge and Greene are the only imitators of Lylie, who have atoned for affectation of style by any felicity of genius or invention; and I certainly do not mean to detain the reader with the Euphuism of Philotimus, by Brian Melbrank, published 1583, or Breton’s *Miseries of Mavillia*, merely because they were printed in black letter, and are as scarce as they deserve to be.

The style of novel-writing introduced by Lylie, was not of long popularity, but the taste by which it was succeeded is not more deserving of commendation. During the agitated reign of Charles I., and the subsistence of the commonwealth, the English nation were better employed than in the composition or perusal of romances. By the time of the Restoration, the popularity of the *Arcadia*, which had been published in the reign of James I., and prevalence of the French heroic romance, fostered a taste for more ponderous compositions than any that had hitherto appeared. The *Eliana*, printed in 1661, is as remarkable for its affectation, though of a different species, as the novels of the school of Euphuism. In *Eliana*, when a person dies, he is said to depart into the subterranean walks of the Stygian grove—to see is always called to invisage, to raise is to suscite, and a ladder of ropes is termed a funal ladder. Flora “spreads her fragrant mantle on the superficies of the earth, and bespangles the verdant grass with her beauteous adornments;” and a lover “enters a grove free from the frequentations of any besides the ranging beasts and pleasing birds, whose dulcet notes exulscerate him out of his melancholy contemplations.”

The celebrated Duchess of Newcastle employed herself in similar productions; but the



only English romance of this description that obtained any notoriety, is the *Parthenissa* of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, which was published in 1664, and is much in the style of the French romance of the school of Calprenède and Scuderi. In the commencement of this work, a stranger, richly armed, and proportionally blest with all the gifts of nature and education, alights at the temple of Hierapolis in Syria, where the queen of love had fixed an oracle as famous as the deity to whom it was consecrated. A priest called Callimachus, who belonged to the establishment, accosted him, and, without farther introduction or ceremony, begged a relation of the incidents of his life: the stranger agreed to furnish him with the notices required as a penance, but it is not clear whether he means on himself or Callimachus; one thing, however, is certain, that a penance is imposed on the reader. He prosecutes his story for some time without intermission, and then devolves it on a faithful attendant. It appears that the stranger is Artabanes, a Median prince, born and brought up at the court of the king of Parthia; and it is also unfolded that he is deeply enamoured of *Parthenissa*. This lady, who proves to be the heroine of the romance, had come, on occasion of the death of her father, to the Parthian court, to beg a continuance to herself of the revenues of a principality which he had enjoyed. Artabanes had soon an opportunity of evincing his passion; for on a great national festival, a procession, with a suitable accompaniment of trumpets and clarions, announced the approach of a character of importance. This stranger proved to be an Arabian prince, who had come on the old errand of establishing, by single combat, the incomparable nature of the charms of his mistress; he displayed a portable picture gallery, comprehending the portraits of four and twenty beauties, whose deluded lovers had the presumption to maintain that the charms of their mistresses equalled those of the fair *Mizalenza*. The prowess of Artabanes not only prevented the resemblance of *Parthenissa* from being added to the exhibition, but obtained for her at one blow, possession of the *chefs-d'œuvre* in the collection of his antagonist. Artabanes, however, had a formidable rival in *Surena*, who

was the chief favourite of the king. As *Surena* found that he made no progress in the affections of *Parthenissa*, he bribed one of her confidantes to place a letter in the way of Artabanes, purporting that a good understanding subsisted between himself and *Parthenissa*. Artabanes had, in consequence, a dreadful combat with *Surena*, whose life, however, he spared, and then abandoned his country, under a firm conviction of the infidelity of *Parthenissa*, and with the fixed resolution of taking up his residence on the summit of the Alps. On his voyage to that lofty region he was taken by a pirate, who presented him, along with fourscore other captives, to his friend and protector, Pompey, the notorious patron and encourager of pirates. Having afterwards escaped from bondage, Artabanes put himself at the head of his fellow slaves, and, his party increasing, the hero of this romance turns out to be our old historical friend Spartacus. The account of the war is given correctly, only it is said to be a mistake that Spartacus was killed in the battle of the Trenches; as he not only survived that combat, but relinquished his scheme of Alpine retirement, and came *incognito* to Rome. There a Parthian friend arrived, who cleared up all his suspicions with regard to *Parthenissa*, and persuaded him to return with him to the East. On his arrival in Asia, he was much encumbered by his old rival *Surena*, and also by a new competitor, who had sprung up in the person of the monarch. *Parthenissa* having fallen under the power of the latter, who, she feared, intended to push his gallantry to the utmost, swallowed a potion, which gave her the appearance of death. Our credulous hero believing she was poisoned, was invaded with so high a sorrow that he stabbed himself, but having recovered by aid of surgeons, he had come to Hierapolis, as related near the beginning of the romance, to consult the oracle on what was to be done in this extremity. Callimachus, the priest, in return for the above relation, undertakes the history of his own adventures: he proves to be Nicomedes, King of Bythia, father of Julius Cæsar's Nicomedes; but while his story is telling, a lady, who has all the exterior appearance of *Parthenissa*, is perceived to land, and enter a thicket with a young knight. Artabanes, however, could



hardly believe her to be his mistress; in the first place, because he knew she was dead; and, secondly, her behaviour was inconsistent with her fidelity to him and with female decorum. The romance breaks off before the author disengages his heroine from the suspicious predicament in which he had placed her. The unfinished state in which the work has been left, which is the chief objection to *Marianne* and the *Paysan Parvenu*, is what no critic will blame in the *Parthenissa*. Besides the episode of *Callimachus*, there is also the story of *Perolla*, one of the adherents of *Spartacus*, who was enamoured of a fair *Capuan*, and by a singular misfortune, considering the very different periods at which they flourished, had *Hannibal* for a rival. Such was the *Carthaginian's* passion, that while he remained in Italy he delivered up the conduct of all martial affairs unto the generous *Maharbal*, and declined the conquest of the world to conquer the unfortunate *Izadora*. Nevertheless he would unavoidably have effected the former object, at the time he advanced to Rome, had not his fair enemy, by the most pressing entreaties, persuaded him to carry his arms to other quarters rather than employ them in the destruction of that city which had given her birth. *Hannibal* and *Spartacus* were, perhaps, the two heroes of antiquity worst qualified to act the parts of whining lovers in a romance; the latter, especially, excites little interest, and no romantic ideas are associated with his name.

Of the six parts, of which this romance consists, one is dedicated to the *Duchess of Orleans*, and the others to *Lady Sunderland*, better known by the name of *Sacharissa*.

The circumstance of the work of *Lord Orrery*, and the *Eliana*, being both left incomplete, shows that there was no great encouragement extended to this species of composition. Indeed, a romance of the description of *Parthenissa*, though it might be well adapted to the more solemn gallantry of the court of *Lewis XIV.* was not likely in *King Charles's* days to be popular in this country, or to produce imitation. There was, in consequence, a demand for something of a lighter and less exalted description, and, accordingly, to this period may be ascribed the origin of that species of composition which,

fostered by the improving taste of succeeding times, has been gradually matured into the English novel. In that age appeared the *Atalantis* of *Mrs Manley*, which, like the *Astrea*, was filled with fashionable scandal. From this circumstance it was popular for a certain period, and its immortality was foretold by *Pope*, as rashly as a thousand years of bloom were promised to the *Beauties* painted by *Jarvis*.

The novels of *Mrs Behn*, who died in 1689, were, for the most part, written towards the close of the reign of *Charles the Second*. Of this lady, *Sir R. Steele* said, as we are informed in *Granger's Biographical Dictionary*, that she understood the practice part of love better than the speculative. Her writings have not escaped the moral contagion which infected the literature of that age; and, indeed, if only one contemporary poet could boast unspotted lays, it can hardly be expected that this should have been the lot of a single novelist. The story of *Oroonoko* is the most interesting of the novels of *Mrs Behn*, and is not liable to the objections which may be charged against many of the others. The incidents which furnished the outline of this tale fell under the author's own observation when she accompanied her father to *Surinam*, and, as related by the novelist, have supplied *Southern* with the plot of one of the best known and most affecting of his tragedies.

*Mrs Behn* was imitated by *Mrs Heywood*, who was born in 1696, and died in 1758. Her earlier novels, as *Love in Excess*—*The British Recluse*—*The Injured Husband*, in which she has detailed the intricacies, and unveiled the loosest scenes of intrigue, have all the faults in point of morals, of the productions by which they were preceded. Her male characters are in the highest degree licentious, and her females are as impassioned as the *Saracen princesses* in the *Spanish romances* of chivalry. The *History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, however, a later and more extended production of this writer, though not free in every passage from the objections that may be charged against her former compositions, is deserving of notice, both on account of its merit, and of having apparently suggested the plan of *Miss Burney's Evelina*.

In the novel of *Mrs Heywood*, a young



lady makes, at an early age, her first appearance in London on the great and busy stage of life. In that city she resides under the protection of Lady Mellasin, a woman of low birth, of vulgar manners, and dissolute character, whose husband had been appointed the guardian of Miss Thoughtless by her father. From this woman, and from the malice and impertinence of her daughter, Miss Flora, the heroine suffers much uneasiness on her entrance into life. Though possessed of a virtuous mind, a good understanding, and a feeling heart, her heedlessness of ceremony, her ignorance of forms, and inexperience of the manners of the world, occasion many perplexing incidents, and lead her into awkward situations, most mortifying to her vanity, which, at length, alarm the delicacy, and almost for ever alienate the affections, of an amiable and devoted lover.

Evelina, it will be recollected, was placed in an analogous situation, and her embarrassments originated in similar circumstances. The chief perplexity of Mr Trueworth, the admirer of Miss Thoughtless, arose from meeting her in company with Miss Forward, who had been her companion at a boarding-school, and of whose infamous character she was ignorant. In like manner the delicacy of Lord Orville is wounded, and his attachment shaken, by meeting his Evelina in similar society at Vauxhall. The subsequent visit and counsel of the lovers to their mistresses is seen, however, in a very different point of view by the heroines.

But not only is the plan of Betsy Thoughtless analogous to that of Evelina, but many of the characters coincide with those delineated in that celebrated performance. Mr Trueworth is the same generous and pleasing lover as Lord Orville. Lady Mellasin, with whom Miss Thoughtless resides in London, is the same low-born, coarse, and dissolute woman with Mad. Duval. The malice and jealousy with which Miss Flora Mellasin persecutes the heroine in the beginning of the older novel, corresponds to the malice and jealousy of the Miss Branghtons. Miss Mabel, the amiable and modest friend of Betsy Thoughtless, seems to have suggested the character of Miss Mirvan, the companion of Evelina; while in the novel of Mrs Hey-

wood, and of Miss Burney, we may trace the same assurance, affected indifference, and impertinent gallantry, in many of the secondary characters.

Towards the middle of the 18th century the number of English novels rapidly increased. Those which have appeared subsequently to that period may, I think, be divided into the *serious*, the *comic*, and the *romantic*.

At the head of the first class we must unquestionably place the works of Richardson. The earliest performance of that celebrated writer is his Pamela, the first part of which was published in 1740. We are informed, in the life of Richardson, that the booksellers, for whom he occasionally employed his pen, had requested him to give them a volume of familiar letters on various supposed occasions. It was the intention of the author to render his work subservient to the benefit of the inferior classes of society, but letter producing letter, it grew into a story, and was at length given to the public under the title of the History of Pamela. In the work above quoted, it is said, that the author's object in Pamela is two-fold: to reclaim a libertine by the influence of virtuous affection, and to conduct virtue safe and triumphant through the severest trials to an honourable reward. With this view, a young girl, in the humblest sphere of life, is represented as exposed to the amorous solicitations of her master. The earlier part of the story consists of the attempts practised against her virtue, and her successful resistance, all which are related in letters from Pamela to her parents, whose characters are intended as a representation of the manners and virtues of the humblest sphere of English society. From the unremitting assiduity of her master, however, our heroine begins to think she may play a higher game than a mere escape from his snares: prudence now comes to the aid of purity, and her master, after a struggle between passion and pride, rewards her by the offer of his hand, which is most thankfully accepted. Two volumes were subsequently added, which exhibited Pamela in the marriage state. From these two parts Goldoni has formed his comedies of Pamela Nubile, and Pamela Maritata.

On its first appearance, Pamela was re-



ceived with universal applause, but its fame has been in some measure dimmed by the brighter reputation of its author's subsequent performances. Of these, *Clarissa* is the production on which his reputation is principally founded. It is the story, as is universally known, of a young lady, who, to avoid a matrimonial union to which her heart could not consent, and to which she was urged by her parents, casts herself on the protection of a lover, who scandalously abuses the confidence she had reposed in him, and finally succeeds in gratifying his passion, though he had failed in ensnaring her virtue. She rejects the reparation of marriage which was at length tendered, and retires to a solitary abode, where she expires, overwhelmed with grief and with shame. It is a trite remark, that it was reserved for Richardson, in this story, to overcome all circumstances of dishonour and disgrace, to exhibit the dignity of virtue in circumstances the most painful, and apparently the most degrading, and to show, which seems to be the great moral of the work, that in every situation virtue is triumphant.

The chief merit of Richardson consists in his delineation of character. *Clarissa* is the model of female excellence. There is something similar in the rest of the Harlowe family, and at the same time something peculiar to each individual. "The stern father," says Mrs Barbauld, "the passionate and dark-souled brother, the envious and ill-natured sister, the money-loving uncles, the gentle but weak-spirited mother, are all assimilated by that stiffness, love of parade, and solemnity, which is thrown over the whole group, and by the interested family views in which they all concur." The character of Lovelace, as is well known, is an expansion of that of Lothario in the *Fair Penitent*; but, in the opinion of Dr Johnson, expressed in his *Life of Rowe*, the novelist has greatly excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. "Lothario," says the illustrious biographer, "with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone to teach us at once esteem and detestation; to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevo-

lence which art and elegance and courage naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain."

But though the character of Lovelace may not perhaps be objectionable in its moral tendency, there is no representation, in the whole range of fiction, which is such an outrage on verisimilitude. Such a character as Lovelace not only never existed, but seems incompatible with human nature. Great crimes may be hastily perpetrated where there is no strong motive for their commission, but a long course of premeditated villainy has always some assignable object which cannot be innocently attained.

Richardson having exhibited in his *Clarissa* a model of female delicacy, grace, and dignity, attempted in *Sir Charles Grandison*, his third and last production, to represent a perfect male character, who should unite every personal advantage and fashionable accomplishment with the strict observance of the duties of morality and religion. All the incidents have a reference to the multifarious interests of this "faultless monster;" and the other characters seem only introduced to give him an opportunity of displaying in every light his various perfections, with the exception perhaps of Clementina, whose mental alienation is painted with such genuine touches of nature and passion, that it would scarcely suffer in a comparison with the phrensy of Orestes, or madness of Lear.

Thus, the object of Richardson, in all his novels, is to show the superiority of virtue. He attempts, in *Pamela*, to render the character of a libertine contemptible, and to exhibit the excellence of virtue in an unpolished mind, with the temporal reward which it sometimes obtains. On the other hand, in *Clarissa*, he has displayed the beauty of mental perfection, though in this life it should fail of its recompence. In *Sir Charles Grandison* he has shown that moral goodness heightens and embellishes every talent and accomplishment.

Besides the publications of Richardson, there are several other productions of English fiction distinguished by their tenderness and pathos, and of which the chief object is to excite our sympathy. In *Sydney Biddulph*, by Mrs Sheridan, every affliction is accumu-



mulated on the innocent heroine, in order to show that neither prudence nor foresight, nor the best dispositions of the human heart, are sufficient to defend from the evils of life. This work, we are told, was written in opposition to the moral system then fashionable, that virtue and happiness are constant concomitants, or, as expressed by Congreve in the conclusion of the *Mourning Bride*,—

That blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,  
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.

In the writings of Godwin, some of the strongest of our feelings are most forcibly awakened, and there are few novels which display more powerful painting, or excite higher interest, than his *Caleb Williams*. The character of Falkland, the chief actor, which is formed on visionary principles of honour, is perhaps not strictly an invention, as it closely resembles that of Shamont, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Nice Valour*. But the accumulated wretchedness with which he is overwhelmed, the inscrutable mystery by which he is surrounded, and the frightful persecutions to which he subjects the suspected possessor of his dreadful secret, are peculiar to the author, and are represented with a force which has not been surpassed in the finest passages and scenes of poetic or dramatic fiction. Godwin's other novel, *St Leon*, is intended to show that the happiness of mankind would not have been augmented by the gifts of immortal youth and inexhaustible riches. But, in fact, the story does not establish the unsatisfactory nature of such endowments. *St Leon*, except in the reserve and distrust created in his domestic circle, always appears rather to be persecuted by his ill fortune, than by the consequences of his supernatural acquisitions. It is unfortunate too, that, in order to show the protracted misery produced by the elixir of life, the author was forced to place his hero in a remote and superstitious age, since we can never help reflecting how different would have been the fate of *St Leon* had he lived in a happier land and more enlightened period.

His misfortunes also are too much of the same description, as they chiefly arise from personal captivity—his successive imprisonments in the jail of Constance, the cells of the

Inquisition at Madrid, and the dungeon of Bethlem Gabor. Hence that portion of the romance which precedes his acquirement of the elixir of life and secret of the transmutation of metals, has always appeared to me the most interesting. The historical part, relating to the Italian campaigns which terminated with the battle of Pavia, is told with infinite spirit. The domestic life of *St Leon* is admirably exhibited in the contrasts of chivalrous splendour, the wretchedness of want, and the comforts of competence; while *Marguerite*, alternately embellishing, supporting, and cheering these varied scenes of existence, forms one of the finest representations of female excellence that has ever been displayed. The character, too, of *St Leon* is ably sustained—we are charmed with his early loyalty and patriotism—his elevation of soul and tender attachment to his family; while, at the same time, his fondness for magnificence and admiration naturally prepares his acceptance of the pernicious gifts of the alchymist. Through the whole romance the dialogues are full of eloquence, and almost every scene is sketched with the strong and vivid pencil of a master. Never was escape more interesting than that of *St Leon* from the *Auto da Fe* at Valladolid, or landscape more heart-reviving than that of his subsequent journey to the mansion of his fathers! Never did human genius portray a more frightful picture of solitude and mental desolation than that of the mysterious stranger who arrives at the cottage of *St Leon*, and leaves him the fatal bequest! At the conclusion we are left with the strongest impressions of those feelings of desertion and deadness of heart experienced by *St Leon*, and which were aggravated by his constant remembrance of scenes of former happiness.

Of the authors of *Comic Romance*, the two most eminent, as every one knows, are Fielding and Smollett, concerning whose works I shall not detain the reader. No one wishes to be told, for the twentieth time, that the former is distinguished for his delineation of country squires, and the latter of naval characters. The eminence of each, in these different kinds of painting, is a strong proof how necessary experience and intercourse with the world are to a painter of manners—Fielding for some



years having been a country squire, and Smollett a surgeon's mate on board a ship of the line. Tom Jones is the most celebrated of Fielding's works, and is perhaps the most distinguished of all comic romances. The author warmly interests us in the fortunes of his hero, involves him, by a series of incidents, in the greatest difficulties; and again, when all is dark and gloomy, by a train of events, at once natural and extraordinary, he relieves both his hero and his reader from distress. Never was a work more admirably planned; not a single circumstance occurs which does not, in some degree, contribute to the catastrophe; and, besides, what humour and *naïveté*, what wonderful force and truth in the delineation of incident! As a story, Tom Jones seems to have only one defect, which might have been so easily remedied, that it is to be regretted that it should have been neglected by the author. Jones, after all, proves illegitimate, when there would have been no difficulty for the author to have supposed that his mother had been privately married to the young clergyman. This would not only have removed the stain from the birth of the hero, but, in the idea of the reader, would have given him better security for the property of his uncle Allworthy. In fact, in a miserable continuation which has been written of the history of Tom Jones, the wrongheaded author (of whom Blifil was the favourite) has made his hero bring an action against Tom after the death of Mr Allworthy, and oust him from his uncle's property.

Of the writings of Smollett, by far the most original is Humphrey Clinker. In this novel the author most successively executes, what had scarcely ever been before attempted—a representation of the different effects which the same scenes, and persons, and transactions, have on different dispositions and tempers. He exhibits through the whole work a most lively and humorous delineation, confirming strongly the great moral truth, that happiness and all our feelings are the result, less of external circumstances, than the constitution of the mind. In his other writings, the sailors of Smollett are most admirably delineated—their mixture of rudeness and tenderness—their narrow prejudices—thoughtless extravagance—dauntless valour—and warm gene-

rosity. In his *Peregrine Pickle*, Smollett's sea characters are a little caricatured, but the character of Tom Bowling, in *Roderick Random*, has something even sublime, and will be regarded in all ages as a happy exhibition of those naval heroes, to whom Britain is indebted for so much of her happiness and glory.

Although, as has been already mentioned, it is not my design to enter into a minute consideration of English novels, an analysis of which would require some volumes, it would not be proper altogether to overlook a *Romantic* species of novel, which seems in a great measure peculiar to the English, which differs in some degree from any fiction of which I have yet given an account, and which has recommended itself to a numerous class of readers by exciting powerful emotions of terror.

"There exists," says an elegant writer, "in every breast at all susceptible of the influence of imagination, the germ of a certain superstitious dread of the world unknown, which easily suggests the ideas of commerce with it. Solitude—darkness—low-whispered sounds—obscure glimpses of objects, tend to raise in the mind that thrilling mysterious terror, which has for its object 'the powers unseen, and mightier far than we.'"

It is perhaps singular, that emotions so powerful and universal should not have been excited by fiction at an earlier period; for this species of composition cannot be traced higher than the *Castle of Otranto*, by Horace Walpole.

The following curious account of the origin and composition of this romance is given by the author himself in a letter to Mr Cole, dated Strawberry-Hill, March 9, 1769. "Shall I confess to you what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning in the beginning of last June from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost bannister of a great stair-case, I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it. Add,



that I was very glad to think of any thing rather than politics. In short, I was so engrossed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months, that one evening I wrote from the time I had drunk tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hand and fingers were so weary, that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking in the middle of a paragraph. You will laugh at my earnestness, but, if I have amused you by retracing with any fidelity the manners of ancient days, I am content."

To the work, however, which was written with so much interest, Mr Walpole did not affix his name, but published it as a translation from an Italian author, whom he called Onuphrio Montalto: he also feigned that it had been originally printed in black letter at Naples, in 1529, and that it had been recently discovered in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England. The production was ill received on its first appearance, and the extravagant commendations heaped on the imaginary author by the real one, appear abundantly absurd, now that the deception has been discovered.

The work is declared by Mr Walpole to be an attempt to blend the ancient romance and modern novel; but, if by the ancient romance be meant the tales of chivalry, the extravagance of the Castle of Otranto has no resemblance to their machinery. What analogy have skulls or skeletons—sliding pannels—damp vaults—trap-doors—and dismal apartments, to the tented fields of chivalry and its airy enchantments?

It has been much doubted, whether the Castle of Otranto was seriously or comically intended; if seriously, it is a most feeble attempt to excite awe or terror; an immense helmet is a wretched instrument for inspiring supernatural dread, and the machinery is so violent that it destroys the effect it was intended to raise. A sword which requires a hundred men to lift it—blood dropping from the nose of a statue—the hero imprisoned in a helmet, resemble not a first and serious attempt at a new species of composition, but look as if devised in ridicule of preceding extravagance, as Don Quixote was written to expose the romances of chivalry, by an

aggravated representation of their absurdities.

But, whether seriously intended or written in jest, the story of the Castle of Otranto contains all the elements of this species of composition. We have hollow groans, gothic windows that exclude the light, and trap-doors with flights of steps descending to dismal vaults. The deportment, too, of the domestics, the womanish terrors of waiting-maids, and the delay produced by their coarse pleasantries and circumlocutions, have been imitated in all similar productions. For this incongruity, Mr Walpole offers as an apology, that Shakespeare was the model he copied, who, in his deepest tragedies, has introduced the coarse humour of grave-diggers and clumsy jests of Roman citizens. He argues, that however important may be the duties, and however grave and melancholy the sensations, of heroes and princes, the same affections are not stamped on their domestics, at least they do not express their passions in the same dignified tone, and the contrast thus produced between the sublime of the one, and the *naïveté* of the other, sets the pathetic of the former in a stronger point of view.

The Old English Baron, written by Clara Reeve, and published in 1780, is the literary offspring of the Castle of Otranto, and, like it, hinges on the discovery of a murder by supernatural agency, and the consequent restoration of the rightful heir to his titles and fortune. This romance is announced as an attempt to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient romance, with the incidents and feelings of real life. The latter, however, are sometimes too accurately represented, and the most important and heroic characters in the work exhibit a natural anxiety about settlements, stocking of farms, and household furniture, which ill assimilates with the gigantic and awful features of the romance.—"Sir Philip had a conference with Lord Fitz-Owen, concerning the surrender of the estate, in which he insisted on the furniture, and stocking of the farm, in consideration of the arrears. Lord Fitz-Owen slightly mentioned the young man's education and expenses. Sir Philip answered, 'You are right, my lord, I had not thought of this point.'" And again, "'You,



my son, shall take possession of your uncle's house and estate, only obliging you to pay to each of your younger brothers the sum of one thousand pounds.'" The baron caught Sir Philip's hand; "Noble sir, I will be your tenant for the present. My castle in Wales shall be put in repair in the meantime. There is another house on my estate that has been shut up many years. I will have it repaired and furnished properly at my own charge.'"

The observations on the romantic species of novel, may conclude with the writings of Mrs Radcliffe, since those who followed her in the same path, have in general imitated her manner with such servility, that they have produced little that is new either in incident or machinery. The three most celebrated of her productions, and indeed the only ones which I have read, are the *Romance of the Forest*, the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and the *Italian*, or *Confessional of the Black Penitents*.

Of this justly celebrated woman, the principal object seems to have been to raise powerful emotions of surprise, awe, and especially terror, by means and agents apparently supernatural. To effect this, she places her characters, and transports her readers, amid scenes which are calculated strongly to excite the mind, and to predispose it for spectral illusion: gothic castles, gloomy abbeys, subterraneous passages, the haunts of banditti, the sobbing of the wind, and the howling of the storm, are all employed for this purpose; and in order that these may have their full effect, the principal character in her romances is always a lovely and unprotected female, encompassed with snares, and surrounded by villains. But that in which the works of Mrs Radcliffe chiefly differ from those by which they were preceded is, that in the *Castle of Otranto* and *Old English Baron*, the machinery is in fact supernatural, whereas the means and agents employed by Mrs Radcliffe are in reality human, and such as can be, or, at least, are professed to be, explained by natural events. By these means she certainly excites a very powerful interest, as the reader meanwhile experiences the full impression of the wonderful and terrific appearances; but there is one defect which attends this mode of composition, and which seems indeed to be

inseparable from it. As it is the intention of the author, that the mysteries should be afterwards cleared up, they are all mountains in labour, and even when she is successful in explaining the marvellous circumstances which have occurred, we feel disappointed that we should have been so agitated by trifles. But the truth is, they never are properly explained, and the author, in order to raise strong emotions of fear and horror in the body of the work, is tempted to go lengths, to account for which the subsequent explanations seem utterly inadequate. Thus, for example, after all the wonder and dismay, and terror and expectation, excited by the mysterious chamber in the castle of Udolpho, how much are we disappointed and disgusted to find that all this pother has been raised by an image of wax! In short, we may say not only of Mrs Radcliffe's castles, but of her works in general, that they abound "in passages that lead to nothing."

In the writings of this author there is a considerable degree of uniformity and mannerism, which is perhaps the case with all the productions of a strong and original genius. Her heroines too nearly resemble each other, or rather they possess hardly any shade of difference. They have all blue eyes and auburn hair—the form of each of them has "the airy lightness of a nymph"—they are all fond of watching the setting sun, and catching the purple tints of evening, and the vivid glow or fading splendour of the western horizon. Unfortunately they are all likewise early risers. I say unfortunately, for in every exigency Mrs Radcliffe's heroines are provided with a pencil and paper, and the sun is never allowed to rise or set in peace. Like *Tilburina* in the play, they "are inconsolable to the minuet in Ariadne," and in the most distressing circumstances find time to compose sonnets to sun-rise, the bat, a sea-nymph, a lily, or a butterfly.

Mrs Radcliffe is indeed too lavish of her landscapes, and her readers have frequent occasion to lament that she did not follow the example of Mr Puff in the play, "I open with a clock striking, to beget an awful attention in the audience—it also marks the time, which is four o'clock in the morning, and saves a description of the rising sun, and



a great deal about gliding the eastern hemisphere." It must be owned, however, that the landscapes of Mrs Radcliffe are eminently beautiful, and their only fault is their too frequent recurrence. It would perhaps have puzzled William of Wyckham to comprehend the plan of her Gothic castles, but they are sufficiently vast, intricate, and gloomy. Nor does this writer excel only in painting rural nature, the accidents of light and shade, or castles and forests, but in descriptions of the effect of music, and, in short, she is eminent for picturesque delineation in general—for everything by which the imagination or senses are affected. I know not that a more striking portrait is any where exhibited than that of Schedoni; and the strong impression he makes on our fancy is perhaps chiefly owing to the very powerful painting which is given of his external appearance.

Of the arts of composition, one of those most frequently employed by Mrs Radcliffe, and which also arises from her love of picturesque effect, is contrast—or the making scenes of different characters or qualities succeed and relieve each other. In this circumstance at least the fair writer agrees with Mr Puff:—

*Puff.* You have no more cannon to fire?

*Prompter from within.* No, sir!

*Puff.* Now then for soft music.

Mrs Radcliffe makes her soft music succeed her cannon with considerable felicity. Thus Emily is conducted by Bertrand and Ugo to a sweet cottage at the foot of the Appenines, previous to the siege of the gloomy castle of Udolpho, in which ghastly fabric she is soon afterwards replaced. In the Romance of the Forest also, not satisfied with Adeline's visit to the dreary tomb, and her journey with her treacherous guide through the midnight obscurity of the forest, she introduces a storm of thunder and lightning, as is likewise done in Emily's journey from Udolpho, in order to contrast more strongly the gay magnificence and soothing beauty of the villa of the marquis.

Akin to this distribution of light and shade, and in order to produce still farther effects of contrast and variety, there is a servant introduced into all these romances, who is recommended to us by simplicity and fidelity—

Annette in Udolpho, and in the other two Jeronimo and Peter. In the Romance of the Forest, the venerable La Luc, accompanied by his daughter and Adeline, visits the Glaciers, and we are in the first placed stunned by a description of cataracts, and made giddy with precipices, lakes, and mountains—"they seated themselves," continues the author, "on the grass, under the shade of some high trees, near the ruins. An opening in the woods afforded a view of the distant Alps—the deep silence of solitude reigned. For some time they were lost in meditation.

"Adeline felt a sweet complacency, such as she had long been a stranger to. Looking at La Luc, she perceived a tear stealing down his cheek, while the elevation of his mind was strongly expressed on his countenance. He turned on Clara his eyes, which were now filled with tenderness, and made an effort to recover himself.

"The stillness and total seclusion of the scene, said Adeline, those stupendous mountains, the gloomy grandeur of these woods, together with that monument of faded glory, on which the hand of time is so emphatically impressed, diffuse a sacred enthusiasm over the mind, and awaken sensations truly sublime.

"La Luc was going to speak, but Peter coming forward, desired to know whether he had not better open the wallet, as he fancied his honour and the young ladies must be main hungry, jogging on so far, up hill and down, before dinner. They acknowledged the truth of honest Peter's suspicion, and took the hint."

In all her under characters, Mrs Radcliffe is extremely fond of delineating their circumlocution—their habit of answering from the point, or giving a needless detail of trivial circumstances, when the inquirer is on the gasp of expectation, and the utmost expedition is requisite. I shall give the first instance that occurs to me. "Peter," says the author, "having been one day to Aubaine for the weekly supply of provisions, returned with intelligence that awakened in La Motte new apprehension and anxiety.

"Oh, sir, I've heard something that has astonished me, as well it may (cried Peter)—and so it will you when you come to know it. As I was standing in the blacksmith's



shop while the smith was driving a nail into the horse's shoe (by the bye, the horse lost it in an odd way)—I'll tell you, sir, how it was.

"Nay, pr'ythee, leave it till another time, and go on with your story.

"Why, then, sir, as I was standing in the blacksmith's shop, comes in a man with a pipe in his mouth, and a large pouch of tobacco in his hand.

"Well—what has the pipe to do with the story?

"Nay, sir, you put me out: I can't go on unless you let me tell it my own way. As I was saying with a pipe in his mouth—I think I was there, your honour?

"Yes, yes.

"He sets himself down on the bench, and taking the pipe from his mouth, says to the blacksmith, 'Neighbour, do you know any body of the name of La Motte hereabouts?'—Bless your honour, I turned all of a cold sweat in a minute! Is not your honour well? shall I fetch you any thing?

"No—but be brief in your narration.

"La Motte! La Motte! said the blacksmith, I think I have heard the name. Have you so? said I; you're cunning then, for there's no such person hereabouts to my knowledge.

"Fool! why did you say that?

"Because I did not want them to know your honour was here; and if I had not managed very cleverly they would have found me out." In short, it appears by the sequel that honest Peter managed so very cleverly, that they by this very management did find him out.

It is impossible to give any specimen of the terrific scenes of Mrs Radcliffe, as their effect depends on the previous excitement of the mind. They are in general admirably contrived in circumstances of time, place, and other incidents, to excite awe and apprehension. "A face shrouded in a cowl," says a writer whom I have frequently quoted, "a narrative suddenly suspended—deep guilt half revealed—the untold secrets of a prison-house, affect the mind more powerfully than any regular or distinct images of danger or of woe." Mrs Radcliffe accordingly, by interspersing certain mysterious hints, gives full scope to conjecture and alarm, and aggravates the terrible, by leaving room to suppose that

what she describes is little in comparison with what is afterwards to be revealed. By the involuntary expressions of her guilty characters, she presents them to our view as groaning under the consciousness of some dreadful crime, which is constantly present to their imaginations, but of which the remembrance does not prevent them from the perpetration of new atrocities. In short, in the hands of Mrs Radcliffe, not merely the trampling of a steed, and the pauses of the wind, but, in certain circumstances, even common footsteps and the shutting of a door, become sublime and terrible.

Of the three great works of Mrs Radcliffe, the *Romance of the Forest*, which was suggested by one of the *Causes Celebres*, is perhaps on the whole, and as a whole, the most interesting and perfect in its fable. Abounding less in powerful writing than either of the others, the story is more naturally conducted, and is clogged with fewer improbabilities. Indeed, the apparently supernatural circumstances are accounted for at the end of the romance in such a manner as scarcely to disappoint the reader, or to appear inadequate to the emotions of surprise and terror, which had been raised in the course of the work. The beginning of the romance is such as strongly to awaken interest; the mysterious flight of La Motte—the manner in which the heroine of the story is intrusted to him—the romantic forest and ruined abbey in which he takes shelter—his alarms for discovery—the arrival of his son—his visits to the awful tomb in the forest—the introduction of the wicked Marquis de Montalt, his deep-laid plots and sudden change of conduct towards Adeline, are all described in the most forcible manner. We are delighted with the wild and romantic seclusion of the abbey; and the spectral part of the story (if I may so express myself) is not exaggerated nor overcharged. There is scarcely to be found in any work of fiction, a more beautiful picture than that of La Luc and his family in the third volume; and it shows that Mrs Radcliffe was capable of painting, not merely the general features of the personages in a romance, but the finer traits of character in a novel of real life. Clara de Luc is the most interesting female character in the volumes of Mrs Radcliffe. In the



Romance of the Forest also we are less fatigued with landscapes, than in the *Mysteries of Udolpho* or the *Italian*. It is true, that the heroine *Adeline* is pretty liberal of her poesy, but in this case we are warned of our danger, and can avoid it; whereas in prose we have no previous notice, and are forced to observe the purple tints, and all the other tints which occur, or in the course of ages may occur at sun-rise or sun-set, lest we may unwarily pass over and lose any of the incidents.

It is to be regretted, that the last volume of the *Italian*, or that portion of it which relates to the Inquisition, has not been managed with more skill, as, by its improbability and exaggeration, it in a great measure destroys the very powerful interest which the other parts of the romance are calculated to inspire. *Schedoni* is wonderfully well painted; and his appearance, his mysteriousness, and the notion with which we are strongly impressed, of his having committed horrible and unheard of crimes, strongly excite our curiosity and interest. The Neapolitan landscapes in this romance are truly beautiful; nor are the scenes of terror less forcibly portrayed. How many accumulated circumstances of danger thrill us with alarm, in the description of the escape of *Vivaldi* and *Ellena* from the convent! How deeply are we impressed by the midnight examination of the corse of *Bianchi*, and the atrocious conference of the *Marchesa* with *Schedoni*, in the dim twilight of the church of *San Nicolo*! But, beyond all, the whole portion of the work, from where *Ellena* is conveyed to the desolate house of *Spalatro* on the sea-shore, to the chapter where she is conducted home by *Schedoni*, is in the first style of excellence, and has neither been exceeded in dramatic nor romantic fiction. The terror is not such as is excited by the moving of old tapestry, a picture with a black veil, the howling of the wind in a dark passage, or a skeleton in a corner, with a rusty dagger lying at its side; but is that which is raised by a delineation of guilt, horror, and remorse, which, if *Shakspeare* has equalled, he has not surpassed. A scene between *Schedoni* and *Spalatro*, before and after the former enters the apartment of *Ellena*, with a design to murder her, is perhaps the most striking that has ever been displayed. The conversation,

too, of the guide who conducts *Ellena* and *Schedoni* through the forest, after they leave *Spalatro*, and the whole conduct of *Schedoni* on the occasion, is admirably painted.

The style of *Mrs Radcliffe* is not pure, and is sometimes even ungrammatical, but in general it is rich and forcible. Her poetry, like her prose, principally consists in picturesque delineation.

On the whole, the species of composition which we have just been considering, though neither very instructive in its nature, nor so fitted, as some other kinds of fictitious writing, to leave agreeable impressions on the mind, is not without its value. To persons who are occupied with very severe and serious studies, romances of this kind afford perhaps a better relaxation than those which approach more nearly to the common business of life. The general tendency, too, of all these terrific works is virtuous. The wicked marquis, or villainous monk, meet at length the punishment they deserve, while the happy heroine, undisturbed by hobgoblins, or the illusions created by the creaking of doors, sobbing of the wind, or partial gleams of light, discovers at length that the terrific castle, or mouldering abbey, in which she had been alarmed or tormented, is a part of her own domain, and enjoys in connubial happiness the extensive property of which she had unjustly been deprived. All this may be very absurd, but life perhaps has few things better than sitting at the chimney-corner in a winter evening, after a well-spent day, and reading such absurdities.

The above divisions of the Serious, Comic, and Romantic novels, comprehend the great proportion of English prose fictions. In this country we have had few of those works in which fable and history are blended, and which form so extensive a class of French novels. With the exception, perhaps, of the *Citizen of the World*, we have no production of any celebrity resembling the *Jewish Spy*, or *Persian Letters*, and in which various remarks on the manners and customs of a country are presented through the supposed medium of a foreigner, unbiassed by the habits and associations of a native. In the class of *Fairy and Oriental Tales*, we are equally deficient; but in that of the *Voyages Imaginaires*, no



nation of Europe has produced three performances of equal merit with Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's Travels, and Gaudentio di Lucca.

De Foe and Swift, the authors of the two former of these works, though differing very widely in education, opinions, and character, have at the same time some strong points of resemblance. Both are remarkable for the unaffected simplicity of their narratives—both intermingle so many minute circumstances, and state so particularly names of persons, and dates, and places, that the reader is involuntarily surprised into a persuasion of their truth. It seems impossible that what is so artlessly told should be a fiction, especially as the narrators begin the account of their voyages with such references to persons living, or whom they assert to be alive, and whose place of residence is so accurately mentioned, that one is led to believe a relation must be genuine which could, if false, have been so easily convicted of falsehood. The incidents, too, are so very circumstantial, that we think it impossible they could have been mentioned unless they had been real. For example, instead of telling us, like other writers, that Robinson Crusoe in his first voyage was shipwrecked, and giving a mere general description of mountainous billows, piercing shrieks, and other concomitants of a tempest, De Foe immediately verifies his narrative by an enumeration of particulars.—“So partly rowing,” says he, “and partly driving, our boat went away to the northward, sloping towards the shore, almost as far as Winterton-Ness. But we made slow way towards the shore; nor were we able to reach it till, being past the lighthouse at Winterton, the shore falls off to the westward towards Cromer, and so the land broke off a little the violence of the wind.”

Those minute references immediately lead us to give credit to the whole narrative, since we think they would hardly have been mentioned unless they had been true. The same circumstantial detail of facts is remarkable in Gulliver's Travels, and we are led on by them to a partial belief in the most improbable narrations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is a good deal of this style of writing in a French work already mentioned, Sadeur's Voyage

But the moral of Robinson Crusoe is very different from that of Gulliver's Travels. In the former we are delighted with the spectacle of difficulty overcome, and with the power of human ingenuity and contrivance to provide not only accommodation but comfort, in the most unfavourable circumstances. Never did human being excite more sympathy in his fate than this shipwrecked mariner: we enter into all his doubts and difficulties, and every rusty nail which he acquires fills us with satisfaction. We thus learn to appreciate our own comforts, and we acquire, at the same time, a habit of activity; but, above all, we attain a trust and devout confidence in divine mercy and goodness. The author also, by placing his hero in an uninhabited island in the Western Ocean, had an opportunity of introducing scenes which, with the merit of truth, have all the wildness and horror of the most incredible fiction. *That foot in the sand—Those Indians who land on the solitary shore to devour their captives, fill us with alarm and terror, and, after being relieved from the fear of Crusoe perishing by famine, we are agitated by new apprehensions for his safety. The deliverance of Friday, and the whole character of that young Indian, are painted in the most beautiful manner; and, in short, of all the works of fiction that have ever been composed, Robinson Crusoe is perhaps the most interesting and instructive.*

The moral effect of Gulliver's Travels is very different. It would, perhaps, be too much to say that the author had an express design to blacken and calumniate human nature, but at least his work betrays evident marks of a diseased imagination and a lacerated heart—in short, of that frame of mind which led him in the epitaph he composed for himself, to describe the tomb as the abode, *Ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit.* We rise, accordingly, from Gulliver's Travels, not as from the work of De Foe, exulting in our nature, but giddy, and selfish, and discontented, and, from some parts, I may almost say brutified. The general effect, indeed, of works of satire and humour is perhaps little favourable to the mind, and they are only

to Australasia, written by Gabriel de Foigni, about the year 1676.



allowable, and may be read with profit, when employed as the scourges of vice or folly.

Gaudentio di Lucca is generally, and, I believe, on good grounds, supposed to be the work of the celebrated Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, one of the most profound philosophers and virtuous visionaries of his age. We are told, in the life of this celebrated man, that Plato was his favourite author; and, indeed, of all English writers, Berkeley has most successfully imitated the style and manner of that philosopher. It is not impossible, therefore, that the fanciful Republic of the Grecian sage may have led Berkeley to write Gaudentio di Lucca, of which the principal object, apparently, is to describe a faultless and patriarchal form of government. This representation of perfection and happiness is exhibited in the journey of Gaudentio di Lucca to Mezzoramia, a country in the heart of the deserts of Africa, whose inhabitants had lived unknown to the rest of the world, and in a region inaccessible, except by the road by which Gaudentio was carried thither. This Italian having followed a sea-faring life, was taken by corsairs, and conveyed to Alexandria. He was there sold to one of the chiefs, or pophars, of this unknown country, who had come to Egypt on mercantile speculation. The best and most striking part of the work is the description of the journey across the desert sands, which the travellers traverse on dromedaries, and which are happily contrasted with those stations that lay on the road, where they sought repose and shelter. The region which Gaudentio finally reaches is described as a terrestrial paradise, and its government, laws, and customs, are what the author conceives to be most perfect in civil polity and social intercourse. His views are somewhat fantastic, but not so visionary as those exhibited in the Utopia. During his abode in this happy land, Gaudentio, who had been discovered to be the grand-nephew of the master whom he had followed to Mezzoramia, is treated with much distinction, and, at length, espouses the daughter of the pophar. But after a residence of twenty-five years, having lost his wife and children, he sets out for his own country, and, after some adventures,

arrives at Bologna, where he is arrested by the inquisition, and forced to give an account of his adventures.

The style of this work is extremely pure, and some of the incidents, especially that of the Grand Vizier's daughter, who was afterwards sultana, exceedingly well managed. The portrait of the English Freethinker, towards the end of the work, is skilfully drawn, and the absurdity of the arguments of Hobbes very humorously displayed.

From the popularity of Robinson Crusoe, many compositions of a similar description appeared in England towards the middle of last century. Such are the "Travels and Adventures of William Bingfield, Esq.;" and also the "Life and Adventures of John Daniel, containing his Shipwreck with One Companion on a Desolate Island: his accidental Discovery of a Woman. Their peopling of the Island. Also a Description of an Eagle invented by his Son Jacob, on which he flew to the Moon, with some Account of its Inhabitants. His Return, and accidental Fall into the Habitation of a Sea-Monster, with whom he lived Two Years." Of all these fictions, the best is the Voyage of Peter Wilkins, which was written about 1750, and has now fallen into unmerited neglect. In that work, the simplicity of the language of De Foe, and also several of the incidents of his most celebrated production have been happily imitated. As in Robinson Crusoe, Peter Wilkins is a mariner, who, after undergoing various calamities at sea, is thrown on a distant uninhabited shore. He is furnished with stores, utensils, and provisions, from the wreck of the ship in which he had sailed. De Foe, however, confines himself to incidents within the sphere of possibility, while the unknown author of Peter Wilkins has related many supernatural adventures—he has also created a new species of beings, which are amongst the most beautiful offsprings of imagination, and have been acknowledged in the Curse of Kehama, as the origin of the Glendoveers:—

The loveliest race of all of heavenly birth,  
Hovering with gentle motion o'er the earth,  
Amid the moonlight air,  
In sportive flight still floating round and round.



I have now finished what I proposed to write on the History and Progress of Fiction. To some of my readers I may appear, perhaps, to have dwelt too shortly on some topics, and to have bestowed a disproportionate attention on others; nor is it improbable that in a work of such extent and variety, omissions may have occurred of what ought not to have been neglected. Such defects were inseparable from an inquiry of this description, and must have, in some degree, existed even if I could have bestowed on it undivided attention, and if, instead of a relaxation, it had been my sole employment. I shall consider myself, how-

ever, as having effected much if I turn to this subject the attention of other writers, whose opportunities of doing justice to it are more favourable than my own. A work, indeed, of the kind I have undertaken, is not of a nature to be perfected by a single individual, and at a first attempt, but must be the result of successive investigations. By the assistance of preceding researches on the same subject, the labour of the future inquirer will be abridged, and he will thus be enabled to correct the mistakes, and supply the deficiencies, of those who have gone before him.







## APPENDIX.



# APPENDIX



## APPENDIX.

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No. I.—p. 16.

### JAMBLICHUS

WAS born of Syrian parents. In his youth he was placed under the care of a learned Babylonian, who instructed him in the manners and customs of his country, and particularly in its language, which by this time must have been somewhat simplified. His Babylonish preceptor, however, was taken prisoner, and sold as a slave at the time of Trajan's Syrian conquest. After this Jamblichus applied himself chiefly to Greek literature, but he informs us that he did not forget his magic, for, when Antoninus sent his colleague Verus against Vologesus, king of the Parthians, he predicted the progress and issue of that contest.

Photius has given a pretty full account of the *Sinon* and *Rhodanes* of Jamblichus, in his *Myriambibla*. A MS. of the romance was formerly extant in the library of the Escorial, which was burnt in 1670. Another copy was in possession of Jungerman, who died in the beginning of the 17th century, but it has since disappeared. Some fragments originally transcribed by Vossius, from the Florentine library, were published in 1641, by Leo Allatius, in his excerpts from the Greek Rhetoricians (*Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscriptions*, vol. xxxiv. p. 57).

Jamblichus, the author of this romance, must not be confounded with either of the Platonic philosophers of that name, both of whom lived in the reign of the Emperor Julian, and were great favourites of the Apostate.

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No. II.—p. 18.

### HELIODORUS,

towards the close of his romance, informs us, that he was of the race of the Sun, and indeed his name seems expressive of some alliance with that

luminary. Though of this high mythological extraction, he accepted of the bishopric of Tricca, in Thessaly, under the Christian emperors Arcadius and Honorius, who reigned in the beginning of the 5th century. It has been said, that a synod having given him the choice either to burn his romance, or renounce his bishopric, the author preferred the latter alternative. This deposition, however seems nearly as questionable as the solar origin of the family of Heliodorus.

The earliest Greek impression of the *Æthiopics* was edited at Basle, in 1535, in 4to, by Vincent Obsopoeus, who purchased the MS. from a soldier who had pillaged the library of Matthias Corvinus at Buda. This edition was followed by that of Commelinus, 1596, 8vo, and of Bourdelotius, printed at Paris in 1619. The last and best Greek edition is that of Coray, Paris, 1804, 2 vols. 8vo. Soon after the Romance was first published in Greek, it appeared in almost all the modern languages of Europe. The whole work was turned into English prose by Thomas Underdown, and printed 1577: part of it was also versified in English hexameters, by Abraham Fraunce, and published in this form, 1591, 8vo. There have been at least four French translations, the earliest of which was by Amyot, whose version is said to have so pleased Francis I., that he presented him to the abbacy of Bellocane. Strange, that ecclesiastical preferment should have been obtained by the translation of a work, of which the original composition is said to have cost its author deposition from a bishopric!

Theagenes and Chariclea soon became a favourite work in France. We are told in particular, that the preceptor of a monastery, at which Racine was educated, having found his pupil engaged in its perusal, took the book from him. The young poet, having procured another copy, was again detected at the same employment by his pedagogue, whom he now told that he was welcome to burn it, as he had got the whole by heart.



No. III.—p. 24.

## ACHILLES TATIUS

is supposed by some to have lived in the 4th century, but Boden thinks he must have been later, because, in some of his descriptions he has obviously imitated the poet Musaeus, whom he thinks posterior to that time. He was a rhetorician, and is said to have composed various treatises connected with astronomy and history. There is an epigram in praise of him, particularly of the chastity of his romance, by the emperor Leo Philosophus. The lines have also been attributed to Photius, but it is not probable he was the author, if we consider the opinion he gives of the work of Tatius in his *Myriabibla*. Jerome Commelinus first undertook an edition of this romance; but, as he died before it was completed, it was published by his nephews in 1601. About forty years afterwards, a more perfect edition was given by Salmasius, at Leyden, and the work was illustrated by a number of notes, which have been generally added to the more recent impressions, of which the last was in 1792, forming the first volume of an intended Bipontine edition of the *Scriptores erotici*. Clitophon and Leucippe was translated into French by the Abbe Desfontaines. There is also a German version by Seybold, with a criticism prefixed, and an English one printed at Oxford in the 17th century.

No. IV.—p. 28.

## LONGUS.

It seems to be very uncertain who LONGUS was, or at what time he lived. Photius says nothing of him in his *Myriabibla*, nor is he mentioned by any of the authors with whom he is supposed to have been contemporary. It has been conjectured, however, that he was born in Lesbos, and, it is supposed from his style, that he did not live later than the 4th or 5th century. But, in fact, this is a very uncertain mode of coming to any result, for I cannot see why, by an assiduous study of the ancient Greek authors, he might not have written as purely in the 10th as in the 5th century. Those writers who lived during the latter ages of the Greek empire, particularly the Sophists (an appellation generally added to the name of Longus), applied themselves to some ancient writer, as Plato, Demosthenes, &c., whose style they tried to emulate, and to this imitation alone

they trusted for excellence. The first Greek edition of the pastoral of Longus was by Columbanus, Florence, 1598. The editor informs us, it was printed from a MS. which he procured from the library of Luigi Almanni, and which was compared by one of the editor's friends, Fulvius Ursinus, with a MS. at Rome, and the various readings transmitted to him. This impression was followed by that of Jungerman, in 1601, and a great variety of others, most of which have been used by Villoison, who boasts in the preface to his edition of 1778, that he had studied Greek twelve hours daily from his infancy. His labours have formed the basis of the latest and best edition of this romance, printed at Leipsic in 1803. Previous to its publication in Greek, Gambarara translated this pastoral romance from the MS. into Latin verse, and this work was printed 1569. In 1559 it was rendered into French by Amyot, and of his version there have been a great number of impressions, one of which was published with figures designed by the regent Duke of Orleans. It has also been exhibited in an Italian form by Annibal Caro, the celebrated translator of Virgil.

No. V.—p. 33.

## CHARITON APHRODISIENSIS

is as little known as the other writers of Greek romance. Indeed, it has been suspected by some, that his graceful name is entirely fictitious; by others it has been conjectured that he was born at Aphrodisia, a city in Caria, and it is supposed, from the imperfection of his style, that the author, whoever he was, existed posterior to the age of Heliodorus or Tatius. His romance was published at Amsterdam, 1750, by D'Orville, from a copy, taken by his friend Antonio Cocchi, of a MS. found in a monastery at Florence. The Latin translation by Reiskius is executed with uncommon spirit and fidelity. The romance itself consists of 144 pages, and the notes added by D'Orville, occupy 788. "Charitonis contextum," says he, "*paucis* ubi opus videbatur illustrandum duxi." The trouble the commentator has taken is the more extraordinary, as he seems to have entertained but an indifferent opinion of the merit of the romance, "et vere dicere licet, Charitonem potius insignibus vitiis carere, quam magnis virtutibus esse commendabilem." In 1753, there appeared an Italian translation, through the medium of which the English one has been formed.



No. VI.—p. 35

## JOANNES DAMASCENUS

was born in the 7th or 8th century, in Syria, and his spiritual romance is said to have been originally written in the language of that country, but it was translated into Greek at an early period. His youth was spent in the service of a Mahometan calif, but he afterwards retired into the monastery of St Sabas, in Syria, where he became a monk, and died at the age of eighty-four. Besides his *Lives of Josaphat and Barlaam*, he is the author of many theological and controversial writings, particularly several works in favour of images against the Iconoclastes, which subjected him to much persecution. His hand, indeed, was cut off on account of the tenets he professed, but was afterwards miraculously restored to him by the Virgin.

Little is known with regard to the remaining writers of Greek romance. EUSTATHIUS, the author of *Ismene and Ismenias*, is called Eumathius in the manuscripts of that production; and it has been suspected that Gualminus, who published the work with a Latin translation in 1618, adopted the name of Eustathius, in order to make the public believe that the romance was written by the commentator on Homer of that name. Gualminus was also editor of the *Dosicles and Rhodantes of Theodorus Prodromus*, a MS. copy of which was transmitted to him by Salmasius, and printed at Paris in 1615. The author of this romance, he informs us, was originally from Russia, but became, soon after his arrival in Greece, a priest, a physician, and a philosopher.

No. VII.—p. 71.

## MERLIN.

Quand les Chevaliers et Dames et Damoysselles furent arrivez, Dieu sait la joye que le Roy leur fist; et s'en vint a Yguerne et a son Mari, et les fist menger en sa table, et fist seoir le Duc de coste lui. Et fist tant le Roy par ses paroles que Yguerne ne se peut deffendre qu' elle ne print de ses jouyaulx, tant qu' elle sceut bien de vrai, que le Roy l'aimoit; et apres que la feste fut passee, chascun se en voulut retourner, et prinrent congie du Roy. Et le Roy leur pria qu' ils revinssissent tousjours, ainsi qu' il leur avoit commandé; si luy accorderent chascun. Si endura le Roy cette

peine d' amours jusques a long-temps. Si ne peut plus endurer ce martyre, et luy convint se decouvrir a deux des plus privéz de son conseil, et leur dit l' angoisse qu' il souffroit pour l'amour d' Yguerne.—Et quant le jour de la feste fut venu, chascun se trouva a Cardenil avecque leurs appareils, tant Dames et Damoysselles, de quoy le Roy fut moult joyeux; et quant le Roy sceut que chascun fut arrivé, et le Duc de Tintaiel, et sa femme Yguerne, si prist sa couronne, et se presenta devant tous les Barons auxqueulx il donna plusieurs riches jouyaulx, et aux dames et Damoysselles aussi. Et quant se vint a la table, que chascun fut assis pour menger, le Roy fut moult ioyeux et lye. Si parla a ung sien conseiller, auquel il se fioit, qui fut nommé Ulsius. Et lui dist que l' amour d' Yguerne le tuoit, et le feroit mourir, et qu' il ne pavoit durer s' il ne la veoit, et que quant il en perdoit la vue, le cueur lui meurdriroit, et que s' il n' avoit remede d' elle, qu' il ne pavoit longuement vivre. Et Ulsius lui respondit: Sire, cuideriez vous bien mourir pour l' amour d' une dame? Saichez, que Je ne suis que ung povre Gentilhomme; mais Je ne cuiderois point mourir pour l' amour d' une femme. Car Je ne ouy parler de femme (pourveu qu' elle fust bien requise) qui, pour ce qu' on luy presente plusieurs dons, ne se consentye a la volente de celui qui la requiert. Et toy qui es Roy, te esbahis tu comme tu pourras avoir l'amour d' une dame! Il semble que tu ayes le cueur bien couart qui n' oses requirrir une dame d'aymer. Et le Roy luy dist: tu ditz vrai, tu sces qu' il convient a telle chose. Si te prie que tu m' aydes en toutes les manieres que tu pourras. Si, prens en mon tresor, ce que tu voudras pour lui donner, et a ceulx et a celles qui sont autour d' elle; et pense de faire a chascun son plaisir, et va parler a Yguerne. Et Ulsius respondit: Je sauray bien faire ce que m' avez commandé. Ainsi tint la court huit jours en grant joye, et avoit le Roy tousjours a sa compagnie, et lui donna de moult riches jouyaulx, et a ses compagnons aussi. Et Ulsius s' en alla parler a Yguerne, et luy dist ce qu' il convenoit a parler d' amours, et luy porta plusieurs beaulx jouyaulx, et riches. Et jamais Yguerne n' en voulut riens; tant qu' il advint ung jour que Yguerne tira Ulsius a conseil a une part, et luy dist.—Ulsius, pourquoi me offres tu tant de si beaulx jouyaulx? Et Ulsius respondit; pour le grant sens et belle contenance que Je voy en vous, votre grant beaulté. Et saichez que tout l' avoir de ce Royaume est a vous; et tous les gens aussi sont a faire vostre plaisir et vostre volente. Et elle respondit: comment sais tu ce? Et il respondit: Dame vous avez le cueur de celui a



qui est le Royaume. Et elle dist; qui est le cueur? C'est le cueur du Roy, dist il. Comment? dist elle; le Roy a le cueur bien felon et bien traître de monstrier a monseigneur si grant semblant qu'il l'aime, si il me veult trahir et deshonnorer; Je te diray, Ulsius, gardes sur ta vie que jamais tu ne me parles de tieulx parolles, que bien saiches que Je le dirois au Duc, et s'il le scavoit, il te conviendrait mourir. Ne ja ne le celeray que ceste foys. Et Ulsius respondit; se Je mouroye pour le Roy, se me seroit grant honneur. Puis il lui dit: Dame, Je me esbahis que vous reffusez le Roy pour vostre amy, qui plus vous aime que luy meme; et veuillez savoir qu'il meurt pour vous, et qu'il mourra si n'avez mercy de luy. Et elle respondit: vous vous gabez. Et il luy respondit: Pour Dieu, Dame, ayez mercy du Roy et de vous-mesmes; car si vous n'en avez mercy, vous en verrez venir grant mal: Ne vous, ne votre seigneur, ne vous saurez deffendre contre sa volente. Et a donc Yguerne respondit en pleurant tendrement: Si feray; Je m'en deffendrai bien. Car jamais ne me trouveray, la feste passée, en la compaignie du Roy, ny en sa cour ne me trouveray; ne pour quelque mandement qu'il face ne viendray. Ainsi se departirent Ulsius et Yguerne.

No. VIII.—p. 74.

#### SANGREAL.

Au jour que le Sauveur du monde soffri mort fust mort destruite et nostre vie restorée. A cet jour estoient moult poi de gent qui creissent en luy; mais il estoit ung chevalier qui avoit a nom Joseph d'Arrimachie. En cette cite estoit Joseph nés, mais il estoit venus en Jherusalem sept an devant cè que nostre sir fue mis en Crois, et avoit rachaté le creanche Jhesu Crist; mais il n'en osoit faire samblant por les felons Juis: Il estoit plein de sapiente, il estoit net d'envie et d'orguel, il secouroit les pources, totes bontés estoient en lui et de lui parole le premier salme del sautier. Ce Joseph estoit en Jherusalem, et moult ot grant duel de la mort Jhesu Crist, et se pensa qu'il onnorroit. Enfin Joseph avoit esté dans la maison ou Jhesu-Crist avoit fait la cene avec ses apotres: Il y trouva l'escuelle ou le fiex Dieu avoit mengié, si s'en sesist; il la porta chez lui, et il s'en servit pour ramasser le sang qui coula des cotés et des autres plaies; et celle escuelle est appelée le Saint Graal.

No. IX.—p. 75.

#### PERCEVAL.

Premierement, dist la mere de Perceval, si vous trouvez, ne pres, ne loin, Dame qui ait de vous besoing, ou pucelle desconseillé, ou qui de votre ayde ait metier, ne lui veuillez denier votre service. Car Je vous dy que tout honneur est a l'homme perdu, qui honneur a dame ne porte; et quiconque honoré veut estre, lui faut a pucelle et a Dame honneur referer. Ung autre enseignement retiendrez: S'il echiet que pucelle ayez gagnée, ou que pucelle de vous soit amie privée, si le baiser elle ne vous denie, le baiser pouvez prendre; mais le reste, Je vous le deffens: fors que si en doigt elle a anneau, ou aumoniere a sa ceinture, si, par amour, anneau ou aumoniere vous donne, licitement le don vous pouvez, en la remerciant, prendre, et le don d'icelle emporter. Perceval prit congé de sa mere, et s'achemina vers la cour du Roy Artus. Le lendemain aux premiers rayons de soleil il decouvrit un riche pavillon.

Quant pres du pavillon fut arrivé, ouvert le trouva, dedans lequel vit un lit noblement accoutré, sur lequel estoit une pucelle seule endormie, laquelle avoient laissée ses demoyselles qui estoient allé cueiller des fleurs pour le pavillon jolier et parier, comme de ce faire estoient accoutumées. Lors est Perceval du lit de la Pucelle approché, courant assez lourdement dessus son cheval: adonc s'est la pucelle assez effrayement eveillée. A laquelle, dit Perceval, "Pucelle, Je vous salue, comme ma mere m'a appris, laquelle m'a commandé que jamais pucelle ne trouvassé, que humblement ne la saluassé." Aux paroles du jeune Perceval, se print la pucelle a trembler, car bien luy sembloit qu'il n'estoit gueres sage, comme le montroit assez son parler: et bien se reputoit folle, que ainsi seule l'avoit trouvée endormie. Puis elle lui dit: "Amy pense bientot d'icy te departir, de peur que mes amis ne t'y trouvent, car si icy te rencontroient, il t'en pourroit mal advenir." "Par ma foi," dit Perceval, "jamais d'icy ne partirai que, premier, baisée ne vous aye." A quoy repond la pucelle que non fasse, mais que bientot pense de departir, que ses amis là ne le treuvent. "Pucelle (fait Perceval) pour votre parler, d'icy ne partirai tant que de vous aye eu ung baiser; car ma mere m'a à ce faire ainsi enseigné." Tant s'est Perceval de la Pucelle approché, qu'il l'a par force baisée; car pouvoir n'eut elle d'y resister, combien qu'elle se deffendit bien. Mais tant estoit lors Perceval lafre et lourd, que la defense d'icelle ne luy



put profiter, qu' il ne luy prit baiser, voulsit elle ou non, voire, comme dit le conte, plus de vingt fois. Apres que Perceval eult par force prit de la pucelle baiser, advisa qu' en son doigt elle avoit ung anneau d' or, dedals lequel estoit une belle claire esmeraude enchassée, lequel pareillement par force lui ota comme le baiser avoit eu : puis le mit en son doigt oultre le gré de la pucelle, qui fort s' estoit defendue quand cet anneau luy a oté. Lors Perceval prenant l' anneau de la Pucelle, usa de telles parolles, comme il avoit fait au baiser, disant que sa mere l' avoit a ce faire enseigné, mais que plus avant ne ailleurs ne toucheroit, comme par sa mere luy avoit été commandé. La pucelle se voyant ainsi despouillée et perforcée de son anneau et de son baiser, se print si fort a lamenter et gemir, que le cuer luy cuida partir. Puis dit a Perceval : " Amy, Je te prie, n' emporte point mon anneau ; car par trop en serois blamée, et toy, possible, en perdrois la vie." Perceval ne prend a cuer ce que la pucelle luy dit ; mais comme depuis qu' il fut de chez sa mere parti, n' avoit mangé ne bu, par quoy ne fut au pavillon de la pucelle sans grand appetit. Et luy, en ce desire de manger, comme tout affamé, advise d' aventure un boucal plein de vin, aupres duquel estoit un hanap d' argent. Puis regarde une touaille, fort blanche et assez fine, qu' il souleve et prend ; et dessous icelle trouve trois patés froids, de chair de Chevreuil. Gueres n' arreta, quand les patés en sa main tint, de se mettre en debvoir d' en taster ; car, comme ai dit grand faim avoit. Partant, si-tot qu' il les tint, en froissa un entre ses mains, et apres en avoir mangé non sobrement, souvent retournoit visiter le boucal. Puis dit a la pucelle : " Dame, Je vous prie, venez et faites comme moy ; quand vous aurez ung pasté mangé, et moy ung autre, encore en restera t il ung pour les survenants." La Pucelle voyant Perceval ainsi dereglement manger, s' en esbahit, et rien ne luy repond ; mais d' autre chose ne se peut allegier, fors que de se prendre a pleurer et a gemir tendrement. Perceval, qui peu garde y prenoit, de la pucelle print congé, apres qu' il eut recouvert le reste des patés dessous la touaille.

No. X.—p. 80.

#### LANCELOT DU LAC.

Et quelle part cuydez vous aller beau Sire, dit Girflet. Le ne vous diray Je pas, dist le Roy, car Je ne puis : et quant Girflet veit qu' il n' en scauroit plus, il se partit tantost du Roy Artus. Et si-tost comme il fut departy commenca une

pluye a cheoir grande et merveilleuse, qui lui dura jusques a ung tertre qui estoit loing du Roy environ demy lieue ; et puis quant il fut venu au dit tertre il descendit, et s' arresta dessous ung arbre tant que la pluye fust passée, et commenca a regarder celle part ou il avoit laissé le Roy ; si veit venir parmy la mer une Nef qui estoit toute plaine de dames et de damoysselles, et quant elles vindrent a la rive la dame d' elles qui estoit Seur au Roy Artus l' appella, et sitost que le Roy Artus veit Morgain sa seur il se leva incontinent, et Morgain le print par la main et luy dist qu' il entrast dedans la nef ; si print son cheval et ses armes et entra dedans la nef.

Et quant Girflet, qui estoit au tertre, eut veu comment le Roy estoit entré en la nef avecques les dames, il retourna vers la riviere tant qu' il peut du cheval courre : et quant il y fut revenu il veit le Roy Artus entre les dames. Si congneut bien Morgain la Faee, car plusieurs foys l' avoit veue. Et la nef si estoit ja plus eslongnée que une arbalestre neust sceu tirer a deux foys.

No. XI.—p. 82.

#### MELIADUS DE LEONNOYS.

Brehus encontra ung Chevalier armé de toutes pieces, qui menoit en sa compagnie une damoysselle et deux escuyers tant seullement. Et sachez que la damoysselle estoit bien vestue, et moult noblement, comme ce feust este une Royne ; et estoit montee sus ung pallefroy blanche, et chevauchoit plaisamment parmy la forest, elle et le Chevalier errant. Le chevalier estoit sus ung grant cheval, et en faisoit mener ung autre en main. Le Chevalier alloit chantant une chanson nouvelle qu' avoit esté faicte nouvellement en la maison du Roy Artus ; et estoit la chanson ainsi :—

En grant joye m' a amour mis,  
Et de grant douleur m' a osté,  
Maulgré tous mes ennemys—  
Je suis si haultement monté,  
Que pour son ami m' a compté  
Celle qui passe fleur de Lys ;  
Et quant pour son homme m' a pris,  
Bien ay le monde surmonté.

No. XII.—p. 86.

#### TRISTAN.

Tristan se couche avec Yseult sa femme. Le luminaire ardoit si cler, que Tristan pouvoit bien



veoir la beauté d' Yseult ; elle avoit la bouche vermeille et tendre, yeux pers rians, les sourcils bruns et bien assis, la face claire et vermeille comme une rose a l' aube du jour. Sy Tristan la baise et l' acolle ; mais quant il lui souvient de Yseult de Cornouailles, sy à toute perdue la volenté du surplus. Cette Yseult est devant lui, et l' autre est en Cornouailles qui lui defent que à l' autre Yseult ne fasse nul riens que a villeinie lui tourne. Ainsi demeure Tristan avec sa femme ; et elle qui d' acoller et de baiser ne savoit riens, s' endort entre les bras de Tristan ; et Tristan aussi d' autre part s' endort entre les bras d' Yseult, jusques a lendemain que les dames et damoiselles vinrent veoir Yseult et Tristan. Tristan se lieve, puis vient au palais.

No. XIII.—p. 92.

#### YSAIE LE TRISTE.

Les chevaliers avoyent tant d'envie sur luy qu' a merveilles. Lors s' appensent comment ils pourront mettre Marc a mort, a leur honneur, et au moins de parolles : Si s' adviserent comment ce seroit fait.

“ Bernard mon compaignon fait d' ivoirie a ceste ville a l' hostel d' ung Lombard, et y a une chambre en laquelle nul n' ose habiter qu' il ne sen repente trop grossement, especiallement si par nuyt y repose. Nous nous trairons pres de luy et luy prierons qu' il y voise, et il yra comme celuy qui de riens na paour. Et vous voirres qu' il luy mescherra en telle maniere que jamais ce ne luy pourra ayder.” A ce se sont tous accordez. Une heure entre les autres estoyent les chevaliers avec Marc, et parloyent de plusieurs besongnes tant qu' il advint que messire Bertrand dist a Marc— “ Sire en ceste ville a ung hostel qui souloit estre a Isaac le Lombard ; mais il n' est nul si hardy qu' en une chambre qui y est osast entrer, ne heberger une nuyt tant soit hardy.”

“ Par ma foy,” fait Marc, “ il seroit bien sot que pour telle chose y lairroit a aller. Je y seray en nuyt quoy quil en adviengne.” Et vers le vespre il fist faire ung grant feu en la chambre ou ces merveilles estoyent, et fist mettre les tables et allumer environ vingt torches, et y avoit bien a boire et a menger. Lors s' enferma dedans tout armé, et fist tout yssir hors, fors luy. Ceux et celles de la ville disoyent communement qu' il estoit allé a la mort ; mais s' assist a table, et commenca a boire et a menger. Mais guieres neut été a table quant table et tout versa ; et puis

ouyt ung si grant bruyt par l' hostel, que c' estoit merveilles a ouyr. Lors que Marc ouyt telle noise sault sus, et tire l' espee, et commence a fuyr comme ung enraigé ; mais il ny voit nully. A' tant vient vers le feu, et redresse sa table, et remet tout sus, et se rassiet ; mais en l' heure fut tout a bas comme devant. Lors ressault sus si courroucé que plus ne peult.—“ Se vous estes de bon pere ou de bonne mere passez avant de par dieu ou de par le dyable.” Mais oncques plus tost ne eust dit ce mot que toute la lueur qui leans estoit fut estainte. Et fut Marc prins, et tant mal mené quil ne se peult ayder de membres qu' il eust, et demoura tout coy estandu emmy la place.

Le lendemain on vint prendre garde de luy, mais on le trouva en tel estat que mieulx sembloit estre mort que vif. Dela fut emporté. Et quant il fut guaruy feist mander ses armes et s' arma ; et fist tant aincois que nul en fust adverty qu' il fut en la salle, ou il avoit este si mallement atourné ; et y beut et mengea, et y jeut. Vers mynuyt fut tant mal atourné que tous ses membres estoyent sans force, et perdit la parolle et le sens ; mais touteffois il advint que gens vindrent leans pour veoir le lieu, et estoit jour, car de la nuyt ny eussent osé aller, et le trouverent ainsi que mort.

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Et quant il fut reguary, ung homme de religion, nommé Annas, alla avec Marc en une chambre. Et quant ils furent seul a seul : “ Bel amy,” fait Annas, “ Je vous jure sur les saints, que se voulez faire ce que Je vous conseilleray, vous yrez en la salle, autrement non :” “ Or dictes,” fait Marc, “ et sans doubte Je feray ce que me conseillerez ;” “ Certes,” fait Annas, “ Je le vueil.

“ Il est vray,” fait Annas, “ que Je suis prebste, et pource vous plaise me dire tous vos pechez.” “ Voulentiers,” fait Marc : lors luy conte, et quant il eut tout dit si luy bailla Annas absolution ; et puis luy enchargea, *en penitence*, que jamais, se il n' estoit premier assailly, ne tuast homme, et aidast a son poure amy. “ Le feray Je volentiers,” fait Marc. “ Or beau sire,” fait Annas, “ Or pouez hardiment aller ou vous avez entrepris, car tel avoit devant pouoir sur vous, que maintenant n'a nul pouoir de vous mal faire.”

Quant ce vit, vers le vespre Marc ne s' oublia mie, aincois s' arma, et vint en la salle ou tant de souffraite avoit eu ; mais guieres n' y eut été quant le dyable vinst a luy, et luy dist, “ que quieres tu en ce que est nostre.” “ Et pourquoy vostre,” fait Marc : “ pource, fait l' ennemy, que la maison a esté faicte des biens qui estoient nostres, que nous avions preste a celuy qui ce fist faire, lequel est en nostre demaine et nostre subject. Et est en nostre pouoir, et emprisonne, en noz prisons



pour plusieurs arretaiges qu' il nous doit, lesquelz il naura jamais payez; et pource veulx Je que tu en sortes, car nul ny a droit que nous." "Par saint Jacques, fait Marc, tu l' auras aincois de ton corps gaingné contre le mien." "Je ne vueil point combatre a toy, fait l' ennemy, car tu es plus fort armé que tu ne souloies." "Fuy d' icy donc," fait Marc. Lors tire l' espée; et sen vient vers luy, et l' ennemy s' en fuit entour la salle. Et Marc le chasse, l' espee au poing, longuement, et par loisir. Mais en la fin bouta l' ennemy le feu par l' hostel: et puis s' esvanouyt.

Quant Marc veit que tout ardoit si en fut tout esbahy, et se part. Et quant il en court si conta son adventure, dont plusieurs personnes enfurent esbahys, et en y eu maint qui plus souvent se confesserent que devant. Et especiallement les chevaliers quant ils devoient entrer en bataille; et disoient qu' estoit la plus seure armeure du monde que confession.

No. XIV.—p. 100.

#### GYRON LE COURTOIS.

Ung jour que le temps estoit bel et clair, comme il pouvoit estre en la fin d' Octobre, advint que le chemin que Gyron tenoit, l' amena tout droictement au pié d' un tertre. Ce tertre estoit tout blanc de la niege, car il faisoit hyver; mais la plaine estoit toute verte, comme si ce fut au mois de May. Au pié de cette montagne, en la plaine, tout droictement dessous ung arbre, sourdoit une fontaine moult belle et moult delectable; et dessous celluy arbre, estoit assis un Chevalier armé de haubert et de chasses chevaleresques; et ses autres armes estoient pres de luy, et son cheval estoit attaché a l' arbre. Devant le Chevalier seoit une Damoy-selle tant belle, que c' estoit merveilles que sa beauté. Et si quelqu' un me demandoit qui estoit le Chevalier, Je dirois que c' estoit Danayn-le-Roux, le fort Chevalier; comme aussi la Damoy-selle qui estoit assise devant luy, n' estoit autre que la belle Damoy-selle Bloye, qui avoit tant aimé Gyron.

No. XV.—p. 103.

#### PERCEFOREST.

Lors dresse l' espée pour luy couper la tete, et le prent par les cheveulx, et le voulut ferir: mais il luy fut advis qu' il tenoit la plus belle Damoi-

selle que oncques veit, par les cheveulx. Lors le regarde, et veoit que c' estoit Ydorus sa femme la Royne. Adonc fut tout esbahy si va dire: ha Douce amye este vous icy. Adonc luy fut advis qu' elle dist—Ouy vrayement doulx amy; ayez mercy de moi. Et le nayn qui estoit là crioit tousjours comme enragé—Gentil Roy occis le ou tu es mort. Ce ne valut pas maille; car le Roy s' assit, et embrasse Darnant, et le print a accoller comme sa femme, et dist: Belle seur, pardonnez moy mon meffaict, car J' esté deceu. Et Darnant tira ung couteau Galoys et fiert le Roy en la poitrine ung si grant coup qu' il luy fist passer a l' autre lez, mais Dieu le ayda que ce fust au dextre coste ung peu dessoubz l' espaulle. Quant le roy sentit le coup il sault sus tout effraié, et le nayn recommença a dire: Roy occis le ou tu es mort. Quant le roy se sentit navré si cruellement il s' apperceut qu' il estoit enchante. Lors leve l' espee et coupe au chevalier la teste, et le corps s' estend, et l' ame s' en va ou elle devoit aller. Et tantost commenca en la forest une noyse et une tourmente si grant de mauvais Esperitz que c' estoit hydeur a ouyr.

No. XVI.—p. 106.

#### ARTUS DE LA BRETAGNE.

Et quant Artus la vit, elle luy pleut plus que quant la vit premierement: si la print par la main et s' assirent a une part entre eux deux; et la Dame et Gouvernau furent d' autre part. Si fut la matinée belle et claire, et la rosée grande; si chantoient les oysellets par la forest: si que les deux enfans s' en esjouissoient en grande liesse pour le doux temps, comme ceux qui estoient jeunes et a qui il ne failloit que jouer et rire, et qui s' entre aymoient de bon cuer sans villenie et sans mal que l' un eust vers l' autre. Lors dist Artus tout en riant—Ma Damoiselle Jeannette avez vous point d' Amy? et elle en souzriant et en regardant Artus doucement luy respondit: Par la foy que Je vous doit ouy, bel et gracieux. Et d' ou est il Jeannette? Sire il est d' un pays dont il est—Et comme est il appelé, dist Artus: la fille dist, vous vous souffrirez; mais pourtant veulx bien que maintenant scachez que le Roy Artus fut un bon chevalier et preux et de grand vertu; et vous dis que mon amy est aussi bon, si meilleur n' est, et si ressemble a vous mieux qu' a personne qui vive, d' aller, et de venir, de corps, et de toutes les choses que nul peut ressembler a l' autre.



No. XVII.—p. 128.

## HUON DE BOURDEAUX

Il entra dedans la salle laquelle il regarda a grant merveilles, car tant estoit bel et riche a le veoir que il n'est clerc au jourdhuy au monde qui la beaulté ne la richesse qui la dedans estoit vous sceust escrire. La eussiez peu veoir autour de la dicte salle les huys des riches chambres qui a la costiete de la salle estoyent, toute la maconnerie de leans, autant qu'elle duroit, estoit faicte et composée du plus beau marbre blanc et poly que oncques peust veoir; les poustres qui par la salle estoyent furent toutes de cuyure doré de fin or: d'autrepart au bout de la salle avoit une cheminée, dont les deux pilliers qui le manteau soubstenoyent estoyent de jaspre, et le manteau fut fait et compassé d'ung moult riche cassidoine, et la listel qui soubstenoit la clere voye estoit faicte toute de fines enneraudes, et la clere voye estoit faicte de une vigne entergectée laquelle estoit de fin or, et les grappes de raisin estoyent faictes des plus fins saphirs du monde. Tant belle et tant riche estoit la cheminee que la pareille on ne trouva en tout le monde; et tous les pilliers qui en la salle du palays estoyent estoyent fais de ung vermeil cassidoine, et le pavement qui en la salle estoit, estoit tout d'ambre.

Quant le Duc Huon eust bien advisé la salle il ouvrit une chambre. Quant il fut entré il regarda amont et aval, et veit la chambre tant richement garnye et aournée tendue et encourtinée des plus riches draps que oncques eust veu en sa vie. Les bancs qui la estoyent et les challis des lits et des couches estoyent tous d'ung fin yvoire blanc, tant richement entaillez ouvrez et garnys de pierres precieuses qu'il n'est langue humaine d'homme ne de femme qui dire le vous sceust; et estoit tout ce fait par enchanterie: le palais que Je vous dy estoit moult grant et large et bien garny de riches chambres. Quant Huon eut veu icelle chambre il feust tout esbahy de ce que leans ne veoit homme ne femme; il regarda ung aultre huys sur lequel estoit escript de lettres d'or, ainsi comme il avoit trouvé a l'huys de la chambre ou il avoit este, et print la clef, si ouvrit l'huys et entra dedans, et choisit tant d'or de richesses de joyaulx de pierres precieuses que grant beaulté estoit a les veoir. Vray Dieu, ce dist Huon, Je cuyde que en tout le monde on ne scauroit ne pourroit trouver la richesse qui est icy amassé; et puis quant la eust été une espace de temps il regarda et veit une aultre chambre; puis quant dedans fut entré, si grans richesses avoit veues encores, les trouva il plus grans, car la dedans

estoyent unes ausmoires moult riches et grandes a merveilles, qui estoyent faictes de fine yvoire tant richement ouvrees et entaillées que beste ne oyseau qui au monde fust on ne avoit laissé que la ne fust entaillé par grant maitrise; dedans les ausmoires y avoit robbes de fin drap d'or et de moult riches manteaulx soubelins et toutes aultres choses qui appartenoyent a vestir a homme; puis estoyent les lits et les couches tant richement couverts et parez que n'est nul qui dire le vous sceust. Car tant estoit la chambre belle et riche que Huon ne se pouoyt saouler de la voir: Leans avoit fenestres et voirrieres moult riches par lesquelles l'on veoit ung jardin, lequel estoit tant bel et si bien garny de fleurs moult odorans, et de tous arbres chargées de plusieurs fruicts, lesquelz estoyent tant delicieux a manger que il nestoyt que seulement a sentir l'odeur ne feust ressazié et remply. D'autre part y avoit d'herbes et de fleurs que si tres grant odeur rendoyent que il sembloit que tout le jardin feust plain de basme.

No. XVIII.—p. 132.

## GUERIN DE MONTGLAVE.

Or sont les champions dedans le parc corps a corps pour combatre: si s'eslongnent lung de l'autre; puis brochent leurs chevaux et vont l'ung contre l'autre comme preux Chevalliers qu'ils estoient, et se donnent trois coups de glaive sans rompre ne entamer haulters ne sans tumber a terre. Le quatrieme fois rompirent leurs lances puis tirerent leurs brands d'acier; Roland avoit Durandal sa bonne espée; et en geta ung coup a Olivier, et Olivier se couvre de son escu; mais l'espée y entra plus d'ung pied et demy. Vassal, dist Roland, vous devez bien aymer l'escu que vous a sauvé ce coup: et ainsi que Roland tiroit son espée Olivier le frapa ung tel coup que Roland n'eust puissance de lever Durandal, et Durandal tombe a terre. Et Olivier suyvit Roland tant comme il peust, et se combatyrent assez longuement; mais Roland n'osoit approcher d'Olivier, car Olivier avoit bonne espée dont il fiert Roland de toutes pars: si alla tant variant et fuyant Olivier que les destriers furent moult las: et Roland s'est eslongné et broche de l'esperon, et descend a pied vueille Olivier ou non. Et quant Olivier le voit si fust bien courroucé, et voit bien que s'il ne descend qu'il luy occira son destrier. Si est descendu Olivier, et Roland prent Durandal: et quant il la tint il ne l'eust pas donnée pour tout l'or du monde. Or sont les barons a pied,



et tint chascun son blason et chascun sa bonne espée, et se donnent de grans coups ; car chascun est fier et de grant puissance. Olivier le ferit ung coup sur le coiffe d'acier tant que le sercle qui estoit d'or cheut en la pree, et fust de ce coup tout etonné, tant qu'il chancela troys coups la teste contre bas. Et quant Roland revint en force il eut grant honte, et regarda Belleaude qui estoit sur la Tour. Par mon chef, dist Rolant, or ne vaulx Je riens si Je ne me delivre tantost docire Olivier. Lors fiert Olivier tantost sur sa targe tel coup qu'il emporta la piece jusques a terre : puis courut sus a Olivier tellement qu'ils sont tous deux cheuz. Or sont les deux barons tumbéz a terre, et laisserent leur espées, et se embrassent et estraignent l'ung l'autre ; mais ne l'ung ne l'autre ne le peust oncques gagner ne avoir son compaignon ; si frappent des ganteletz d'acier l'ung contre l'autre, par le visaige, si que le sang en coule a terre ; si furent tant en ce point lassez et travaillent qu'ils se sont relevez par accord, et revont aux espees comme devant.

No. XIX.—p. 133.

#### GALYEN RHETORE.

Sitot que Galyen eut advisé le Pere qui l'engendra, il descendit de dessus son Cheval et l'ala embrasser ; et moult courtoisement l'osta hors de l'estour, et le porta decoste le rocher, et le posa a terre sur le bel herbe vert ; puis se coucha decost lui, et moult piteusement le regreta en disant—“ Helas pere, Je voy qu'il vous convient mourir ; mal venistes oncques par deca. Jacqueline ma mere qui m'a long temps nourry en Constantinople ne vous verra jamais.” Et Olivier lui respont—“ Tu dits vrai, mon tres doulx fils, mais ung jour qui passa lui avoie fait promesse de retourner et de l'epouser : mais nous venismes deca qui men a garde ; ne oncques puis ne retourneray en France, dont mon cueur est dolent—Je la commande a Dieu qui le Monde forma. Le Duc Regnier mon pere, et ma dame de mere, qui en ses flans me porta, ne ma seur Bellaude jamais ne me verra : Helas Doulx Jesus ! quelle douleur aura le Roy Charlemagne de ceste mort quand il le saura—helas pourquoy ne venez vous cy Charlemagne ! Et vous mon chier enfant, qui souvent me baisez, Dieu vous veuille tousjours avoir en sa sainte protection et garde. Adieu mon tres gracieulx et doulx enfant, qui en vostre giron et sur vos genoulx me tenez—Adieu Jacqueline ma tres doulce Amye ; pardonnez moi gentil

Damoyselle car Je ne vous ay pas tenu promesse : ce a été par les faulx desloyaulx paiens que Dieu mauldie—Adieu vous dy plaisante Seur Bellaude, car moult grant douleur aurez de ma mort quant vous le scaurez : de vos beaulx yeux vers et rians arrousez souvent votre doulce face. Tres doulce seur plus ne me baiserez, puis qu'a la mort Je dois le corps rendre.” Le vaillant Conte Olivier estoit couché sur la terre nue, ou la mort angoisseusement le tourmentoit, et son fils Galyen lui faisoit ombre pour la chaleur de Soleil, qui merveilleusement estoit chault, qui raioit sur sa face ; et Rolant estoit au pres qui moult regretoit sa mort et piteusement plouroit a grosses larmes. Adonc Olivier se commanda a Dieu, et la veue lui alla troubler, et lui partit l'ame du corps. A l'heure, eust eu le cueur bien dur qui n'eust plouré de pitie, du dueil qui demenoit Galyen et Rolant.

No. XX.—p. 137.

#### DOLIN DE MAYENCE.

Se trouvant ainsi seulet Dolin commenca a chercher par le palais deca et dela, mais il n'y trouva creature vivant. Mais comme il n'eust de ce jour gueres mangé l'appetit luy commenca a venir, parquoy il descendit en la cuisine ou il trouva viandes a foison, chair fresche et salée toutehabillé, et venaison, vollaibles, pain, vin et autres victuailles a planté. Et ainsi qu'il vouloit couvrir la table, pour prendre sa refection, il ouyt une douce voix qui chantoit fort melodieusement, tellement qu'il navoit onc ouyt chose qui fust si plaisant a ouyr, et pensoit assurément que ce fust quelque Ange du ciel, parquoy il jura que il ne mangeroit ne prendroit viande, premier qu'il eust sceu ce que c'estoit. Alors il commenca a chercher d'un costé et d'autre par le palais, tant que finalement il se trouva pres d'une chambre en laquelle il apperceut une belle jeune damoyselle toute seule, assise sur un lict couvert d'un samis verd, laquelle il regarda a travers une fonte de l'huis, et la trouva si belle qu'a son advis il estoit impossible de trouver au monde son paragon ; sa robbe estoit d'un fin satin verd, faicte a l'Alemand, bordeé de quatre bords de passement blanc, et avoit ceinte une ceinture qui estoit faicte toute de perles et pierreries montant a la valeur de plus de cent marcs d'argent ; elle avoit les yeux clairs et estincellans comme l'estoile de jour, la bouche petite et riante, le couleur vermeille comme la rose, les cheveux longs pendans sur les



espaules jaunes comme fil d'or, et avoit sur son chef un chapeau de perles fines. Elle estoit aagée seulement de seize ans et deux mois, mais elle estoit tant sage et bien apprise que merveilles, gracieuse et fort courtoise en son langage : elle s'estoit retirée en ceste chambre pour un peu reposer apres disnee, et s'estoit mise a chanter pour chasser le sommeil. Dolin la contemplant a son aise disoit a part soy, que jamais il n'avoit veu si belle creature ; comme aussi il n'en avoit pas beaucoup veu : Je ne scay, dist il si c'est un Ange du ciel, ou quelque autre chose encore plus divine, car Je croy qu'onc il n'en fut telle de mere née : et fut alors si ardemment esprits de l'amour d'elle, qu'il ne pouvoit penser a autre chose qu'a sa divine beaulté. Estant de tout embrasé de l'ardeur que ce jeune archer aveugle luy faisoit sentir jusques au moelles il ne scavoit en quoy se resoudre, craignant par trop de l'offenser s'il luy rompoit son repos ; ce neantmoins apres avoir sur ce longuement discource en son esprit il se print a hurter a l'huis de la chambre tout bellement, et luy dist : Gracieuse Damoyse, Je vous prie par courtoisie que veuillez m'ouvrir l'huis de ceste chambre. Elle cuidant que ce fust un sien cousin, qui ordinairement hantoit en la maison, luy fait ouverture de la chambre, parquoy Dolin entra dedans, et la salue comme il scavoit bien faire ; mais elle voyant que ce n'estoit celui qu'elle avoit cuidé estre changea de couleur, parquoy son teinct n'en devint que plus beau, et luy ayant rendu son salut luy dist : Je me donne grand merveille Seigneur, qui vous a donné tant de licence de me venir trouver en ce lieu. A quoy il respondit promptement : Certainement ma Dame, l'amour vehemente que Je vous porte, et non autre respect, m'a acheminé en ce lieu, non point pour vous donner ennuy ou fascherie, mais pour vous presenter mon service, s'il vous plaist l'avoir pour agreable, vous priant me dire pourquoy vous vous tenez ainsi seulette en ce chambre. Sire Chevalier, respondit elle, la courtoisie de voz parolles m'incite a vous declarer chose qui ne m'est de moindre importance que de la vie.—Sçachez que la tristesse et angoisse qui m'afflige le coeur ne me permettent reposer de nuict ni de jour, et ce pourtant que mon pere a delibéré de me bailler pour femme a un ancien chevalier qui de n'agueres m'a demandée en mariage, lequel venant a estre consommé Je n'auray de ma vie un seul jour de soulas, pourtant que Je ne pourray jamais aymer celui qui est a moy si inegal. Ma dame vous estes maintenant delivré d'un tel mariage, et pourtant si cest vostre plaisir de prendre ma foy, et me donner la vostre, Je vous emmeneray avec

moy en mon palais, ou vous serez servie et honorée, et la Je vous espouseray solennellement : mais entretant, Je vous prie qu'il vous plaise avoir esgard a l'amour grand que Je vous porte, et le recompenser d'un amour reciproque, en ne refusant ce point tant désiré que l'on nomme le don de merci. Quand elle l'entendit parler ce langage elle commença a muer couleur, mais il la print entre ses bras et la baisa. Puis il dressa la table, laquelle il couvrit de plusieurs sortes de mets, et de pain et vin excellent ; puis il s'assit tout aupres d'elle, et en la reconfortant, luy dist. Ma dame et maitresse de mon coeur, Je vous prie ne vous melancoliez que le moins que vous pourrez, car, moyennant la grace de Dieu, J'espere vous faire en brief Dame de Mayence la Grande. Ainsi ils souperent et se repeurent a leur aise, ne prenans propos que d'amour, et durant le soupper ne se pouvoient saouler de regarder l'un l'autre. Apres le soupper, ils s'en allerent tous deux coucher en un beau lit richement garni, ou les baisers et accolades qu'ils s'entre-donnerent furent infinies et sans nombre ; s'ils se contenterent de cela seulement Je le laisse penser a ceux qui autres fois se sont trouvez en telles escarmouches : vray est que l'un et l'autre estoit aprentif a tel mestier, mais il ne tarda gueres qu'ils y furent aussi bons maistres que les plus experimentez, et eussent voulu que la nuict eust duré un an entier tant ils estoient ravis.

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No. XXI.—p. 140.

#### OGIER LE DANOIS.

Adonc Morgue la Fae le mena par la main au Chasteau d'Avallon, là ou estoit le Roy Artus son frere, et Auberon, et Mallabron ung Luyton de Mer. Or quant Morgue approcha du dit Chasteau, les Faes vindrent au devant d'Ogier, chantant le plus melodieusement qu'on sçauriot jamais ouyr : si entra dedans la salle pour soy deduire totalement. Adonc vist plusieurs dames Faes aournées, et toutes couronnées de couronnes tres sumptueusement faictes, et moult riches ; et toute jour chantoient, dansoient et menoient vie tres joieuse, sans penser a nulle quelcuonque meschante chose, fors prendre leurs mondains plaisirs. Et ainsi qu'Ogier se devisoit avecques les dames, tantost arriva le Roy Artus auquel Morgue la Fae dist—“ Approuchez vous, Monseigneur mon Frere, et venez saluer la fleur de toute Chevalerie, l'honneur de toute la noblesse de France ; celui ou bonté, loyauté, et toute



vertu est enclose—c' est Ogier de Dannemarcke, mon loyal amy, et mon seul plaisir, et auquel git toute l'esperance de ma lyesse." Adonc le roy Artus vint embrasser Ogier tres amiablement et luy dit—"Ogier tres noble Chevalier vous serez le tres bien venu, et retrace Je nostre seigneur doucement de ce qu' il m' envoyeung si notable chevalier." Puis Morgue la Fae lui mist sur son chief une couronne riche et tres precieuse, que nul vivant ne la scauroit priser, et avecques ce elle avoit une vertu en elle merveilleuse, car tout homme qui la portoit sur son chief il oubloit tout dueil, tristesse et melencholie, ne jamais luy souvenoit des pays, ne de parens qu' il eut \* \* \* . Et Ogier et Morgue la Fae s' entraymerent si loyaullement que ce fut merveille, non pensens a chose de monde fors d' escouter les sons de tous les instrumens dont on se puisse corder; sonnans si doucement qu' il n' estoit si dur cueur qui n' oubliast tout dueil, tristesse et melencholie seulement pour leur prestre l' oreille; car c' estoit ung lieu si delectable, qu' il n' estoit possible a homme de souhaiter chose qu' il ne trouvast leans. Et penses qu' Ogier, qui tant avoit veu de chose, en estoit si esbay, qu' il ne scavoit qu' il devoit faire, ne dire, si non qu' il cuidoit mieulx estre en Paradis que a nulle autre region.

## No. XXII.

Note of the prices which the romances of chivalry, and a few of the Italian Tales, mentioned in this volume, brought at the sale of the Roxburgh library:—

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | £    | s. | d. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|----|
| Roman du San Graal et de Merlin, MS. •<br>magnifique sur velin, relié en 2 grands<br>vol. fol. enrichi de 32 miniatures, et<br>les Lettres initiales peintes en cou-<br>leurs rehaussées d' or, . . . . .                                                                                       | 38   | 17 | 0  |
| L' Hystoire du Sainct Greal, fol. Paris<br>1516, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 17   | 17 | 0  |
| Perceval Le Galloys, fol. Paris 1530, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 15   | 15 | 0  |
| Lancelot du Lac, 3 vol. in 1, fol. Paris<br>1533, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 21   | 0  | 0  |
| Le Roman de Meliadus de Leonoy, MS. tres ancien, sur velin, fol., . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 12   | 0  | 0  |
| L' Hystoire de Tristan, filz du noble<br>Roy Meliadus de Leonois, fol. Paris,<br>Verard, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                              | 32   | 0  | 6  |
| Ysaie Le Triste, fol. Paris; Galyot de<br>Pre, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 15   | 0  | 0  |
| Ysaie Le Triste, 4to, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 6    | 10 | 0  |
| Le Roman du Roy Artus, fol. MS., . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 37   | 16 | 0  |
| Roman de Giron le Courtois, fol. Paris,<br>Ant. Verard, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 33   | 12 | 0  |
| L' Hystoire de Perceforest Roy de la<br>Grande Bretagne, fol. 6 vol. en 3,<br>Paris 1528, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                             | 30   | 0  | 0  |
| Artus de Bretagne, fol. MS. de 15<br>Siecle, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2    | 2  | 0  |
| L' Hystoire de Cleriadus et Meliadice<br>4, Lyons 1529, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 7    | 12 | 0  |
| Cleriadus et Meliadice, fol. MS., . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 4    | 5  | 0  |
| Recueil des Romans des Chevaliers de<br>la Table Ronde, MS. sur velin en<br>3 vol. folio, contenant Le Roman du<br>San Graal, Hist. de Merlin; Le Ro-<br>man de Lancelot du Lac, &c., ce<br>Recueil est enrichi de 747 Miniatures<br>avec les initiales peintes en or et<br>couleurs, . . . . . | 78   | 15 | 0  |
| Collection des Romans contenant; Le<br>Roman de Brut d' Angleterre; Du<br>Roi Artus; De Giron le Courtois,<br>&c. MS. sur velin de l' an, 1391, re-<br>lié en 2 grands vol. fol. enrichi de<br>105 miniatures et les initiales peintes<br>en or, . . . . .                                      | 57   | 15 | 0  |
| Les Faits et Gestes de Huon de Bour-<br>deaulx, fol. Paris 1516, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 20   | 5  | 0  |
| L' Hystoire de Guerin de Monglave,<br>4to, Paris, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 3    | 1  | 0  |
| Galyen Restauré, 4to, Paris, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 8    | 0  | 0  |
| Milles et Amys, fol. Paris, Verard, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 14   | 0  | 0  |
| Milles et Amys, 4to, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 3    | 0  | 0  |
| Les Faits et Prouesses de Jourdain de<br>Blaves, fol. Paris 1520, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 12   | 12 | 0  |
| La Fleur des Batailles ou L' Hystoire<br>de Dolin de Mayence, 4to, Paris, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 8    | 0  | 0  |
| Ogyer le Dannoy, 4to, Paris, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 3    | 11 | 0  |
| L' Hystoire de Regnault de Montauban,<br>fol. edition tres ancienne, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 32   | 11 | 0  |
| L' Hystoire de Maugis d' Aygremont,<br>4to, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 6    | 0  | 0  |
| L' Hystoire de Petit Jehan de Saintré,<br>fol. Paris 1517, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 16   | 5  | 6  |
| Le Roman de Jason et Medée, fol. ed.<br>tres ancienne, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 21   | 10 | 6  |
| L' Hystoire du Roy Alexandre Le<br>Grand, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1    | 14 | 0  |
| Le Recueil des Histoires de Troyes, par<br>Raoul le Fevre, fol., . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 116  | 11 | 0  |
| The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye,<br>by Raoul le Fevre, translated and<br>printed by Caxton, fol. 1471, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                         | 1060 | 10 | 0  |
| L' Arbre de Batailles par H. Bonnet,<br>fol. Lyons 1481, . . . . .                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 12   | 12 | 0  |



|                                                                              | £    | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|----|
| Le Ciento Novelle Antike, 4to, Bologna 1525, . . . . .                       | 23   | 10 | 0  |
| Il Decamerone di Boccaccio, fol. ediz. prim. Venet Valdarfer 1471, . . . . . | 2260 | 0  | 0  |
| Il Decamerone di Boccaccio, 8vo, ediz. vera Firenze. Giunti 1527, . . . . .  | 29   | 0  | 0  |
| Cinquante Novelle di Massuccio Salernitano, . . . . .                        | 5    | 15 | 6  |
| Hecatommithi di Giraldis Cinthio, 2 tom. 8, Monte-Regale 1565, . . . . .     | 11   | 0  | 0  |
| Le Novelle di Bandello, 3 vol. 4to, et 1 vol. 8vo, Lucca 1554, . . . . .     | 29   | 0  | 0  |
| Morlini Novellæ, 4to. Neap. 1520, . . . . .                                  | 48   | 0  | 0  |
| Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, fol. Verard, . . . . .                             | 15   | 13 | 0  |

No. XXIII.—p. 298.

#### JEAN PIERRE CAMUS

was born at Paris, 1582, of a family of some distinction: he was elevated to the bishopric of Beley before he was twenty-six years of age, and in this situation was remarkable for the conscientious discharge of his ecclesiastical duties: he was much beloved by the protestants, but drew on himself the hatred of the monks, against whom he declaimed and wrote without intermission for many years. In 1629, Camus resigned his bishopric, and retired to an abbacy in Normandy, granted him by the king. Afterwards, however, he was prevailed on to accept of ecclesiastical preferment, and was nominated to the bishopric of Arras; but before his bulls arrived from Rome, he died in the seventieth year of his age, in 1652, and was carried, in compliance with his instructions, to the hospital of Incurables.

The numerous sermons he delivered, some of which were afterwards published, are remarkable for their *naïveté*. One day pronouncing a discourse, which he had been appointed to preach before the Trois Etats, he asked, "What would our fathers have said to have seen offices of judicature in the hands of women and children? What remains but to admit, like the Roman emperor, horses to the parliament? And why not, since so many asses have got in already?" He also said one day from the pulpit, that a single person might blaspheme, lie, or commit murder, but there was another sin so great *qu'il falloit être deux de le commettre*. In somewhat better taste was his appeal to the charity of a numerous auditory.—"Messieurs, on recommande a vos charités une jeune damoiselle qui n'a pas assez de bien

pour faire *Vœu de Pauvreté*." A great number of similar anecdotes concerning Camus, though not implicitly to be depended on, may be found in the *Menagiana*.

No. XXIV.—p. 317.

#### SCARRON.

Paul Scarron was born at Paris in 1610. He was of a respectable family, and was son to a man of considerable fortune. After the death of his mother his father again married. Scarron became an object of aversion to this second wife, and was, in a manner, driven from his paternal mansion. He assumed the clerical habit, which was by no means consonant to his disposition, travelled into Italy, and at his return continued to reside in Paris. A great part of his youth was passed in the society of Marion de Lorme and Ninon L'Enclos, whose gaiety, joined to their mild and accommodating morality, may have contributed, in some degree, to form the disposition of Scarron. The excesses in which he engaged destroyed his constitution—an acrid humour is said to have distilled on his nerves, and to have baffled all the skill of his physicians. At the age of twenty-seven he was seized with sciatica and rheumatism, and the most singular complication of painful and debilitating disorders; the approach of these distempers is said to have been accelerated by a frolic, in which he engaged during a carnival, in which he disguised himself as a savage, and being hunted by the mob, was forced for some time to conceal himself from his pursuers in a marsh. Whatever may have been the cause, he was, at the age of thirty, reduced to that state of physical reprobation, which he describes in a picture he has drawn of himself. "My person was formerly well made, though little; my disorder has shortened it a foot; my legs and thighs first formed an obtuse angle, and at length an acute angle; my thighs and body form another angle; and my head reclines on my breast, so that I am a pretty accurate representation of a Z; in a word, I am an abridgement of human miseries. This I have thought proper to tell those who have never seen me, because there are some facetious persons who amuse themselves at my expense, and describe me as made in a different way from what I am. Some say I am a *Cul de Jatte*; others that I have no thighs, and am set on a table in a case; others, that my hat is appended to a cord, which, by means of a pulley, I raise and let down to



salute those who visit me. I have, therefore, got an engraving, in which I am accurately represented; indeed, among your wry-necked people, I pass for one of the handsomest."

With a view of alleviating his sufferings, Scarron visited different baths in France, but always returned to Paris in the same state of distortion in which he had left it. In addition to his other calamities he now found himself much embarrassed in his circumstances. After his father's death he and his full sisters became involved in a law-suit with his stepmother and her daughters, which he lost. The case, or *factum*, which he drew up for the occasion, is entitled "Petition, or whatever you please, for Paul Scarron, Dean of the Sick People of France, Anne and Frances Scarron, all three much incommoded in their Persons and Circumstances, Defenders, against the Husband of Magdalane Scarron, &c., all whole and healthy, and making merry at the expense of others." The remainder of the petition is in a style of absurdity corresponding to its burlesque title. To add to his burdens, his two full sisters now consented to reside with him at Paris; of them he used to say, "que l'une aimoit le vin, et l'autre les hommes." At length he was considerably relieved in his circumstances by a pension from Cardinal Richelieu, and another from Anne of Austria. In 1646 he also obtained a living in the diocese of Mans from the bishop, and, as we have already seen, he began his Roman Comique on going to take possession of it.

Soon after his return to Paris, he became acquainted with Mademoiselle D'Aubigné, who lived with her mother in indigent circumstances, in a house opposite to that in which Scarron resided; and in two years after the first formation of this acquaintance, he was united to the young lady, who was now sixteen years of age. By this marriage Scarron lost his benefice at Mans, but still derived from it a considerable annual revenue, as he had sufficient interest to procure it for the *valet de chambre* of his friend Menage, who received the clerical tonsure for the occasion.

Scarron had formed expectations of a pension through the interest of the Cardinal Mazarine, and had dedicated to him one of his poems. In this hope he was totally disappointed, and accordingly wrote a satire, and suppressed an eulogy, of the minister. His house became a frequent place of rendezvous for those who were discontented with Mazarine, and who, collectively, have been so well known under the appellation of the *Fonde*. His most frequent visitors were Menage, Pellisson, and Sarrazin. In the society which resorted to the residence of her husband, Mad. de

Scarron probably acquired those accomplishments of person and character, which laid the foundation of her future destiny.

The infirmities of Scarron daily increased; but he still continued to occupy himself in writing *Vers Burlesques*. His principal composition in this style is the *Virgil Travestie*, on which his celebrity, for some time after his death, almost entirely rested. The chief pleasure now felt in the perusal of these productions, arises from our knowledge of the severity of the author's sufferings at the time he wrote them, and our admiration at his unalterable gaiety in the midst of so many misfortunes. But, indeed, in all ages—les gens qui font le plus rire sont ceux qui rient le moins.

Scarron was at length finally released from all his miseries in October, 1660. Every one knows that after his death his widow went to reside as an humble companion with a lady, at whose house she became acquainted with Mad. de Montespan. She was thus introduced to the notice of Lewis XIV., with whom she so long lived under the name of Mad. de Maintenon. Perhaps the elevation to which Mad. Scarron attained, might be the reason why none of his numerous friends wrote the life of her husband, nor collected the anecdotes current concerning him, as his remembrance was by no means agreeable to his widow, and till the last moment her flatterers abstained from every thing that might tend to revive the recollection. "On a trop affecté," says Voltaire, "d'oublier dans son epitaphe le nom de Scarron: ce nom n'est point avilissant; et l'omission ne sert qu'à faire penser qu'il peut l'être."

No. XXV.—p. 319.

ANTOINE FURETIERE,

author of the *Roman Bourgeois*, was born at Paris, in 1620. After he had been received an advocate, and even obtained some law appointments, he passed into orders, and obtained the abbacy of Chalivoy. He was admitted into the French Academy, 1662, and printed in 1658 an allegorical satire on the eloquence of the time. His *Dictionnaire Universel de la langue Françoise*, which was the foundation of that known under the name of *Dictionnaire de Trevoux*, was not edited till after his death; for, having published a preliminary discourse, the farther printing was interdicted by the French Academy, which accused him of having purloined the materials which they had



amassed for a similar work. Much was written on both sides on the subject of this controversy, and Furetiere spent the concluding years of his life in publishing libels against his former associates, which, according to the expression of one of the historians of the academy, "ne donnent pas une trop bonne idée de son esprit, et qui en donnent une bien plus mauvaise de son coeur." Furetiere was finally convicted by the enemies he had thus exasperated, and expelled the academy. His place was not supplied during his life, but on his death the academy manifested its surviving resentment, by forbidding Mr Bayle, his successor, to pronounce his eulogium.

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No. XXVI.—p. 328.

GEORGE OF MONTEMAYOR

was born in Portugal, in the neighbourhood of Coimbra. When very young he went into Spain, and, in the quality of musician, attended the infant Don Philip, son of Charles the Fifth: when this prince ascended the throne under the name of Philip II., Montemayor remained in his service in the capacity of a poet and wit. In this employment he continued till his death, which happened in 1562, two years after the publication of the *Diana*, which was printed in seven books in 1560. The continuation in eight books, by the physician Alonzo Perez of Salamanca, appeared in 1564, and that of Gaspard Gil Polo in 1574.

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No. XXVII.—p. 346.

LOUIS LE ROY DE GOMBERVILLE

was born in the beginning of the 17th century; he became an author at the age of fifteen, as he published a volume of poetry in 1624, consisting of quatrains, in honour of old age. He gave over writing romances about the age of forty-five, and in his frequent journeys to his territory of Gomberville, having formed a particular connexion with the Solitaries of Port-Royal, he became occupied with more serious concerns, entered on a penitentiary life, and wrote, it is said, a sonnet on the Sacrament; he relaxed, however, we are told, towards the end of his days.

No. XXVIII.—p. 349

GAUTIER DE COSTES SEIGNEUR DE LA CALPRENEDE

was by birth a Gascon, and was educated at Thoulouse. He came first to Paris in 1632, and entered into the guards. In the year 1648, he married a woman, who according to some writers, had five husbands; and it has been said that Calprenede was poisoned by her; this story, however, is not believed, as it has been pretty well ascertained that he died in 1663, in consequence of an accident he met with from horseback.

Besides his romances, Calprenede has written a great number of tragedies, as *La Mort de Mithridate*, *Le Comte d'Essex*, *Bradamante*, &c. &c. In his prefaces to these tragedies, and in his conversation, he showed a good deal of that disposition for which the Gascons are proverbial. Boileau discovered this even in the heroes of his dramas:—

"Tout a l'humeur Gasconne en un auteur Gascon, Calprenede et Juba parlent du même ton."

Cardinal Richelieu having read one of his tragedies, found the plot was tolerable, but declared the verses were *lâches*; this being reported to the author, he exclaimed, "Comment! *Lâches*—Cadédis il n'y a rien de lache dans la maison de la Calprenede."

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No. XXIX.—p. 355.

MADAME SCUDERI

was born at Havre, but came at an early period of her life to Paris, where she chiefly resided till her death, which happened in 1701, when she was in the 94th year of her age.

The Hotel de Rambouillet seems to have been the nursery in which the first blossoms of her genius were fostered; and it must be acknowledged, that if the succeeding fruits were not of the finest flavour, their bulk was such as almost to render competition hopeless. They at least procured her admission into all the academies where women could be received. She corresponded with Queen Christina, from whom she received a pension, with marks of particular favour, and during several years her house was attended by a sort of literary club, which, at that time seems to have been the highest ambition of the women of letters at Paris



These honours did not preserve her, more than her brother, from the satire of Boileau. The pomp and self-conceit of the brother, and the extreme ugliness of the sister, furnished the poet with abundant topics of ridicule. The earliest romances of Madame Scuderi were published under the name of her brother, and, in fact, he contributed his assistance to these compositions.

It is said, that M. and Madame Scuderi, travelling together at a time when they were engaged in the composition of *Artamenes*, arrived at a small inn, where they entered into a discussion, whether they should kill the Prince Mazares, one of the characters in that romance, by poison or a dagger; two merchants who overheard them procured their arrest, and they were, in consequence, conducted to the *Conciergerie*, but dismissed after an explanation. A similar story has been somewhere related of Beaumont and Fletcher. While these dramatists were planning the plot of one of their tragedies at a tavern, the former was overheard to say, "I'll undertake to kill the king." Information being given of this apparently treasonable design, they were instantly apprehended, but were dismissed on explaining that they had merely imagined the death of a theatrical monarch.

No. XXX.—p. 362.

#### MADAME LA FAYETTE

was daughter of Aymar de la Vergne, governor of Havre de Grace. In 1655 she married Francis, Count de la Fayette. She was held in high esteem in the reign of Lewis XIV., and was much admired by all the wits of the period, who frequently assembled at her house, and to many of whom she was a liberal benefactress. Segrais, after being obliged to quit his residence with Mademoiselle Montpensier, became domesticated with Mad. La Fayette, and was the chief director of her literary pursuits. In his name her two celebrated romances were first given to the public, and it was on the appearance of *Zayde*, that Huet had the complaisance to write his excellent essay on the origin of romance. Besides her novels, Mad. La Fayette is author of *Memoirs of the Court of France*, in 1688, &c., *History of Henrietta of England*, and *Portraits of Persons about Court*; works admired for the same graces of style, and delicacy of sentiment, which characterize her *Zayde* and *Princess of Cleves*.

No. XXXI.—p. 367.

#### MARIVAUX

was born in 1688, and died in 1763; his life is not composed of many incidents; he was twice married, was very poor and very charitable, and very easily offended, particularly in any thing relating to his own works. His conversation, we are told, was singular, and for some time amusing, but at length became fatiguing from its metaphysical monotony; he was a man of no learning, and had a special contempt for the poetry of Homer, on whom he wrote a parody; he also travestied the *Telemaque* of Fenelon. Besides these works, and his novels, he was the author of a number of dramatic pieces, which were very successful on the *Theatre Italien*, but have contributed little to the posthumous fame of their author.

No. XXXII.—p. 369.

#### ANTOINE PREVOT

was born at Hesdin, in Artois, in 1697. In his youth he twice entered into the order of the Jesuits, which he twice quitted for a military life. Tired with dissipation, he became, after the accustomed noviciate, one of the Benedictines of St Maur. But scarcely had he taken the triple and irrevocable vow of chastity, obedience, and poverty, than he repented of his choice, and, disgusted with the restraint of the monastic profession, escaped into England, where he wrote some of his earliest works, and formed a tender connexion, which removed him still farther from the bosom of the church. By the mediation, however, of the Prince of Conti, he was permitted to return to France, and soon after became the secretary and grand almoner of his patron. In this situation he continued busily employed in the composition of numerous writings of all descriptions, till, having imprudently contributed to the periodical productions of a journalist, who indulged in rather free remarks on the government and religion of his country, he was banished to Brussels. He was soon, however, recalled to France, and entered anew on those immense literary pursuits, of which the fruits were the *Histoire General de Voyages*, the *Translations of Richardson's novels*, &c. The year preceding his decease, he retired from Paris to a small house at St Firmin, near Chantilly. His death happened



in the neighbourhood of this retreat, in the shocking and unheard of manner thus related by his biographer:—"Comme il s' en retournoit seul a Saint-Firmin, le 23, Novembre 1763, par la forêt de Chantilly, il fut frappé d' une apoplexie subite, et demeura sur la place. Des paysans qui survinrent par hazard, ayant apperçu son corps étendu au pied d' un arbre, le portèrent au curé du village le plus prochain. Le Curé le fit déposer dans song église, en attendant la justice, qui fut appelée, comme c'est l' usage lorsqu' un cadavre a été trouvé. Elle se rassembla avec precipitation, et fit proceder sur le champ par le Chirurgien, a l' ouverture. Un cri du Malheureux, qui n' étoit pas mort, fit juger la verité a celui dirigeoit l' instrument, et glaça d' effroi les assistans. Le chirurgien s' arreta; il étoit trop tard, le coup porté étoit mortel. L' Abbé Prevot ne r' ouvrit les yeux que pour voir l' appareil cruel qui l' environnoit, et de quelle maniere horrible on lui arrachoit la vie."

No. XXXIII.—p. 381.

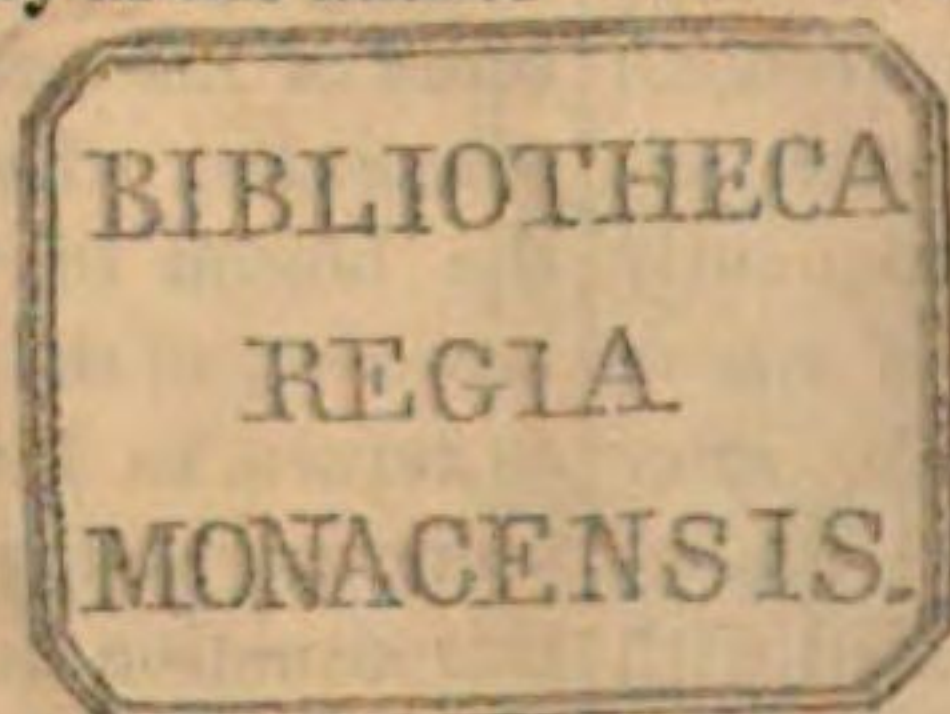
MAD. D'AULNOY, MURAT, & LA FORCE,

were the three principal writers of fairy tales in France. The first of these ladies was the daughter of M. Le Jumel de Barneville, a gentleman of one of the first families of Normandy, and was married to Francis, Count D'Aulnoy. To the advantages of noble birth and alliance, she united those of beauty and wit—she was distinguished for the elegance of her manners, and talents for conversation. Besides her celebrity as the author

of fairy tales, she is also well known by her Travels in Spain.

Mad. Murat daughter of the Marquis de Castelnau, and wife of the Count de Murat, was born in 1670. She is said to have been of a very lively and ardent disposition, and devoted to pleasure, which is indeed acknowledged in the species of confession which she has made in the *Memoires de sa Vie*, a work which is believed to have been written by herself. She had the misfortune to displease Mad. de Maintenon, who suspected her of having written a libel, in which the private court of Lewis XIV., towards the close of the 17th century, was grossly insulted, and she was, in consequence, banished to a distance from the capital. She was recalled, however, in 1715, by the regent, Duke of Orleans, at the intercession of Mad. de Parabere, her intimate friend. She did not, however, long enjoy the pleasure of again partaking in the amusements of the capital, as she died at Paris in the year after her recall.

Mademoiselle de la Force was grand-daughter of Jacques de Caumont, subsequently Duc de la Force, whose escape from the massacre of St Bartholomew has been celebrated in the *Henriade*, and who afterwards greatly signalized himself by his exploits, during the reigns of Henry IV. and Lewis XIII. His grand-daughter was united, in 1687, to Charles de Brion, but the marriage was declared null ten days after its celebration. She survived this short union nearly forty years, during which she distinguished herself by various compositions, besides her *Contes de Fées*. Of these productions, her poetical epistle to Mad. de Maintenon, and her *Chateau en Espagne*, have been chiefly celebrated.





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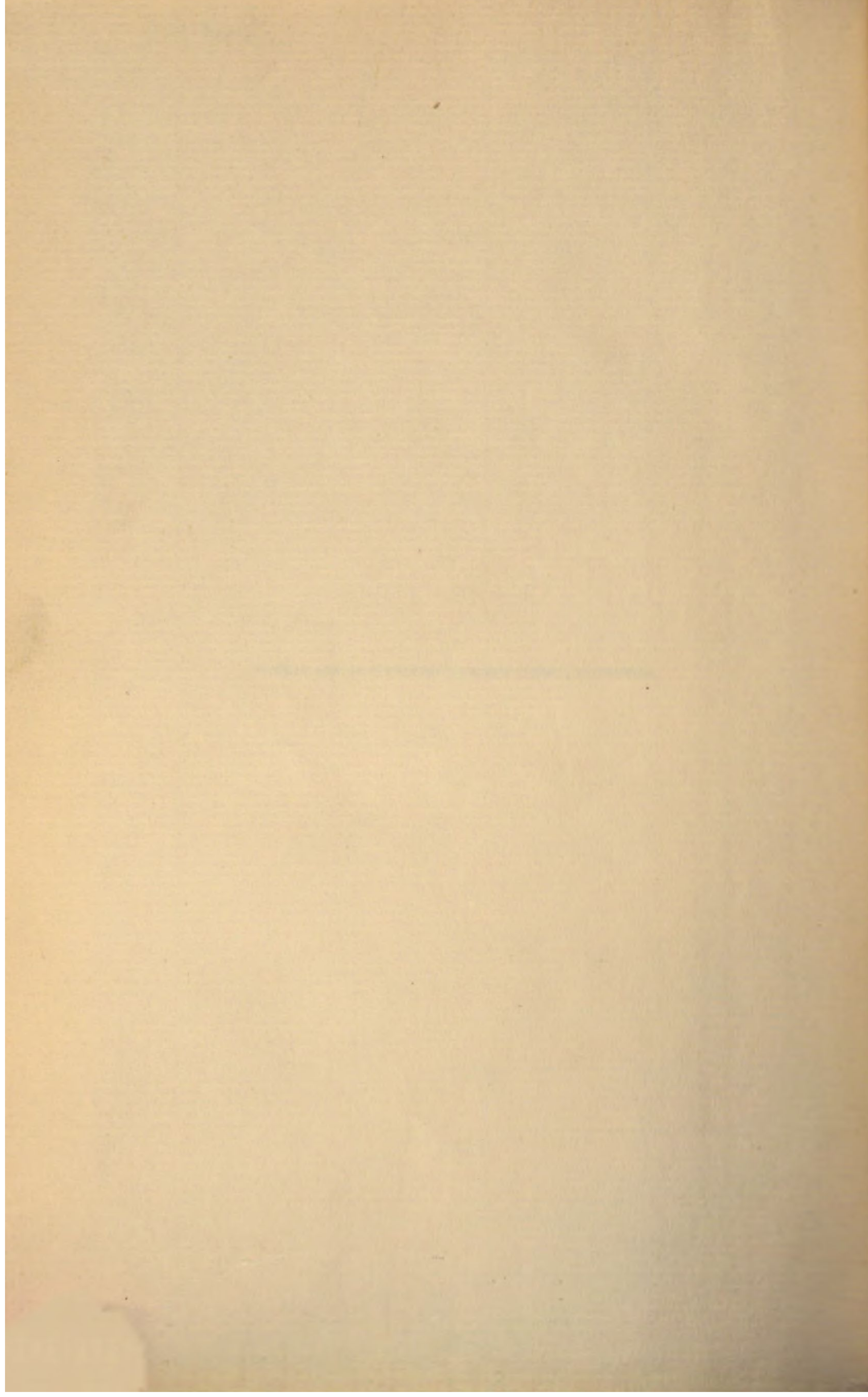
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